# **WINTER 2012** PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS **VOLUME 21, NO. 1**

# **Detour From Destruction**

by Ron Humphrey

12-year-old boy, Mark Downs's heart stopped beating. Hurled through the windshield of a car racing 110 miles per hour when it crashed, he was pronounced dead at the scene. But at the local hospital, doctors managed to restart his heart and revive him.

hen he was a

That near brush with death could have prompted Mark to reevaluate the meaning of his life, but he missed the opportunity. "I was young and still wanted to live my own will," he says. Instead he set himself on a 20-year path of alcohol, drugs, theft, juvenile detention, jail and eventually, a California state prison.

The car crash was only one part of Mark's difficult childhood. His father, when he bothered to show up, molested him. Mark concealed the abuse from his mother, an alcoholic. Left to himself, Mark and a friend began running away, breaking into homes, and stealing. By 15 Mark was injecting himself with drugs. "My addictions had

begun and there was no stopping them. I was on the road to destruction."

Any hope of a stable life ended with his mother's death five years later. He also lost his father and older brother to untimely deaths. Mark drifted in and out of iail until finally he received an eight-year prison sentence. Stuck behind bars, Mark released his anger and energy into fights. He was stabbed three times. "Prison was all about survival," he says.

### **Kicking Off the Hinges**

Alone in his cell one night, Mark wondered if anyone cared whether he lived or died.

The answer eventually came through a dedicated Prison Fellowship Bible study leader, who showed Mark through Scripture that Jesus loved him and would always be with him.

Mark was stunned.

"I knew about God and I thought He had a plan for my life, but I was not able to find it," he says. "Through all those years,

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Photo by Mariano Friginal

# Visiting Room Sabotage

by Lennie Spitale

ike an onion, most topics have many layers to them. The subject of prison visitation is no exception. A series could be written on the various aspects of the visiting experience. Everything from transportation issues to entry procedures and back again. I'd like to address something different, something I call "visiting room sabotage." It's that thing that happens when you were hoping for a good visit and it suddenly goes south. It's when, by the close of the event, both parties wind up hurt and angry and later feel guilty for sabotaging their own visit.

It was the same when I was in prison, and it's the same now. How often, for example, have you and your visitor overheard these selfish phrases coming from an adjoining table or booth? Maybe it was yours?



"What took you so long? I've been waiting for two hours! You said you'd be here at 6:30."

"You don't care what I'm going through! You can just get up and walk out of here when we're done!"

"I thought you were going to send me that care package. I ain't received nothing!"

"Can't you leave more than 30 lousy bucks in my canteen?"

"How come you haven't been answering the phone?"

"Who've you been seeing?" Or sometimes it's the visitor who brings in the negative focus:

"You don't know what it's like

having to take care of the kids by myself."

"Joey's doing lousy in school. He won't listen to me. He gets in fights all the time."

"Your phone calls cost too much. I can't accept them anymore."

"I heard someone else has been visiting you. Who is it?"

"How dare you accuse me! We wouldn't even be in this mess if it weren't for you!"

And on it goes. What happened? Where did all that anger come from? How did they wind up hurting the person they most love? Why did the visit have to

end on such a sour note?

Some visits are rightfully doomed from the beginning, as when a wife and a girlfriend show up at the same time. Others just seem to take an unexpected turn for the worse. I'm thinking of husband and wife visits, or those of parents and children.

## When Separation **Stress Explodes**

A lot of the stress has to do with the pain and frustration of separation. The prisoner is feeling it; the visitor is feeling it. Little things can suddenly get big. The time seems so long, and the candle of hope seems to be flickering. The whole thing is just so frustrating! The longer the sentence, the harder

But the basic problem is that two worlds have collided in a no-man's land called the Visiting Room. And unless compassion and love override selfishness and self-pity, the results will be dismal.

Men and women in prison

often express to me that they know how hard it is for their loved ones to visit them. Distances can be great and gas prices high. Some of their visitors have very little extra money and have to rely on public transportation or the kindness of friends to get there. Maybe they had to arrange for a babysitter or take time off work. Responsibilities had to be postponed in order to get to the prison. And then there is the whole, humiliating experience of the entry process! The lines and the lockers, the searches and the metal detectors. By the time they finally sit down, they feel like they've been caught up in an exhausting whirlwind of experiences. They know the inmate had only to wash up, comb his or her hair, and bounce off to the visiting room when his or her name was called.

But the prisoner lives in a crude and negative world, and it's not always easy to shake it off when it comes time for the meeting. For the visitor, especially if it is a spouse, the demands and

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**Inside Journal** | Winter 2012

# **Entertaining Angels**



ast Christmas I
attended a party
with Santa Claus,
elves, cookies,
punch, tons of
gifts and, oh yeah,

kids – 200 kids. I was at a church in Florida where for several years the church members have opened their doors to the kids of incarcerated parents and their caregivers. It was a blast!

As the families arrived at the church and had their pictures taken with Santa, volunteers handed out snacks, hot dogs and chips. At craft stations, the kids made cards to send to their incarcerated mom or dad.

Watching the children decorate the cards, I sat down next to a little boy – maybe 6 or 7 years old – and asked him about the card he was making. He had decorated it with boots, a saddle, a horse and a cowboy

hat. I asked him if his dad liked horses. He quietly told me that his dad had worked on a cattle ranch, and that when his dad came home he would work there again. I asked him if he had ever visited his dad in prison, and he silently shook his head, "no." (I encourage you

I saw he was working on another card, and I asked him if he was sending two to his dad.

to read "Visiting Room Sabo-

on making the most of your

do come around.)

tage" on page 1 for helpful tips

visits with loved ones when they

"No, this one is for my uncle,"

My heart just broke. This little boy, who should be playing catch with his dad – or his uncle, in the absence of his dad – was sending both men cards in prison. They would not be playing catch with him any time soon.

As I talked with him a bit more, the announcement came that the program was starting. He started to leave but suddenly turned back and gave me a quick hug. I guess he hugged the closest thing to a dad or an uncle he could find in that moment, as he thought of them and wished they were with him.

In spite of the sadness of the moment, it was also a day of joy and hope for that little boy, plus 200 other kids and their caregivers. I, too, was deeply touched by spending time with these "angels" who are each so special in God's sight, and I renewed my commitment to make sure that Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree® program serves prisoners and their families for many more years to come.

And what about you? Has Angel Tree been an important part of your family's life, this year or in years past? I'd love to hear your story. Write to "Entertaining Angels," P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146.

And I pray that wherever you are, this first *Inside Journal* edition of 2012 helps you face the new year with renewed hope.

Jim/Liske Chief Executive Officer, Prison Fellowship

# Visiting Room Sabotage Continued from page 1

difficulties of life on the outside have become twice as hard.

# Ten Guidelines For Success

Following are 10 guidelines I would suggest after observing these visits for nearly 30 years in Christian prison ministry. Maybe one or two will be helpful to you.

**1.** Verbally acknowledge that each other's stress is real. You are temporarily living in two different worlds. Acknowledge that the differences can create misunderstandings. Empathize, but don't pretend to fully understand the other's stress factors.

# 2. Give each other adequate time to express your feelings.

I recommend that the one doing time allow the visitor to be the one who talks about his or her life first. The prison world is a small one; by listening to your loved one's experiences first, it'll help to pull you out of it a little bit.

- 3. Give each other the freedom to be honest about your feelings. (If you can't handle the truth, don't ask for it.)
- **4.** There is a time for everything. Agree together whether or not the timing is right to bring up certain issues. If one (or both) of you is not emotionally ready to handle something, you must mutually agree to put it on a back burner until the time is right.
- **5.** Listen with your heart as well as your ears. For the men, keep in mind that, if the visitor is a wife or girlfriend, she doesn't necessarily want you to fix the problem; she just wants you to

know how she feels. (Since you are already feeling frustrated at your inability to fix outside problems, this should actually be a help to you.)

## 6. Identify the real issues.

(But do this with gentleness and respect.) Most of the time, the surface issues aren't the real problem. Sometimes the anger is rooted in unresolved conflicts. For example, family members may be hiding their anger over all the pain and turmoil the incarcerated one has caused, but be afraid to express it.

# 7. The conversation shouldn't be dominated by one person. Agree to give each other equal

time to talk about what has been going on in your lives.

- 8. Be kind. It's not all about you. I once heard someone say: "Be kind to each other. Everyone is fighting big battles." The shrink-wrapped world of prison life can cause one to become very self-focused. And, just as easily, the demands and responsibilities of outside life can cause visitors to become the same way.
- 9. Make a commitment at the beginning of each visit that you will make no unreasonable demands upon the other. Stick by it.

# 10. Ask for practical ways in which you can be of help to each other.

Here's a bonus guideline for Christian readers: (a) Keep a prayer list. (b) Read the same Bible passages on the same days and discuss them at your visit. ■

Lennie Spitale is the author of Prison Ministry and a seminar instructor with Prison Fellowship.

# A Detour From Destruction Continued from page 1

I was looking to God for all the wrong reasons, yet He never gave up on me."

Sitting in his cell, Mark reviewed his Bible study and his eyes fell on Jesus' words in Revelation 3:20: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and

"My
addictions
had begun,
and there was
no stopping
them. I was
on the road to
destruction."

opens the door, I will come in and sit with him, and he with Me."

Says Mark today, "I didn't just open the door to Jesus, I kicked the hinges off!"

Mark made a decision to

follow Jesus that day, and his life turned in a new direction. "I surrendered my life to Jesus and for the first time, I prayed with a pure heart, not knowing what to expect but wanting something different in my life. I could see a purpose in my life now, a little light at the end of a long tunnel."

Mark was water baptized in 2006 after his release from prison. He cleaned up his life forever, or so he thought. An old associate lured him back into minor drug use, and Mark was jailed for several brief stints in 2007.

"I still had some gray areas in my life that God was working on," he explains. "God was cleaning out the old and putting in the new. He was building me strong for the future." Mark resumed his Bible study while in jail, where PF volunteers waited to help him overcome his lingering difficulties. This time, the message stuck.

In early 2008 Mark was paroled to an out-patient rehabilitation clinic. By August he had completed the program with such success that he was hired as a manager-counselor at a sober living program.

Mark became a member of a church in Clovis, California. He also began volunteering in the local community.



"I Want to Go Back"

Mark has stayed "clean and sober" for more than four years, a miracle he attributes to his confidence in God's power and love for him. "I no longer tell God how big my mountain is, I tell the mountain how big my God is!" proclaims Mark. "He knows my heart, He hears my whispers, and He answers my prayers."

Now 47, Mark is a changed man. Instead of continuing a life of self-destruction, he allowed God to give him a new heart, and now he reaches out to other lonely prisoners with the love and hope of Jesus Christ.

"My church has just kicked off a new ministry for prisoners, and Prison Fellowship is one of our partners," says Mark. "After what I have been through in my life, I feel led to minister to inmates. I want to go back inside prison and mentor others, as was done for me."

Prison Fellowship field director

Janice Little, who has known Mark for years and attends the same church, says, "Mark is a vital part of Celebrate Recovery and a valuable mentor in our reentry program. He always has a smile on his face and is eager to be of help."

Mark adds, "I don't know what tomorrow will bring, but I know what yesterday brought. And if I continue to put my faith and trust in God, then today is going to be just fine!" ■

# **How Healthy is Your Heart?**

by Alyson R. Quinn

henever we enter a new year, many of us make wonderful resolutions about how this

year is going to be better. The resolutions look great on paper: We are going to lose ten pounds. We are going to get a diploma. We are going to kick those bad habits for good. We feel better just thinking about all the great things we are going to do.

But before we know it, January is almost over, and then February rolls around, and our goals get fuzzy. Actually, by Valentine's Day, we've put on a few more pounds, the enrollment period for GED classes has slipped by, and those bad habits are worse than ever before. Oh well, we say, we can always try again next year.

But what if there wasn't going to be a "next year"? For hundreds of thousands of Americans with heart disease, there won't be.

February is National Heart Health Month, and it's the perfect time to reflect on the sobering fact that heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in America, claiming almost 600,000 lives per year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### **Preventing Heart Disease**

The good news is that four out of five heart disease deaths are preventable with some simple lifestyle changes. Here's some heart-healthy tips to keep you making resolutions for years to come:

• Get your heart pumping. An active heart is a healthy heart. Start an exercise club on the yard, do some push-ups before bed, or strengthen your



legs by "sitting" against the wall without a chair. (Take it easy, though, if you feel dizzy or in pain.)

- Skip the salt. A little salt is good for you, but eating too much of it can raise your blood pressure to dangerous levels. Most prepared foods have plenty of salt already, so put that salt shaker down, and try to skip salty snacks from the canteen. Your heart will thank you.
- Eat your greens. As much as you can, steer away from foods that are high in fat. Fill up on fruits, vegetables and whole grains. They contain nutrients that can help keep your heart healthy, without the fats that clog up your arteries like backed-up plumbing.

Of course, that blood-pumping organ in your chest isn't the only heart that needs your attention and care. You also need to look after your metaphorical heart: the center of your thoughts, emotions and will.

A wise person once wrote, "Guard you heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life" (Proverbs 4:23, NLT). In other words, you need to keep an eye on your thoughts, emotions and desires, because they can take you places you don't want to go.

Left to our own devices, though, we tend to neglect our hearts. Just as hundreds of thousands of people ignore the simple steps that could save them from heart disease, we all let our hearts already so prone to choose what's wrong - get so clogged with corrupt thoughts and desires that no light seems to break through. A prophet named Jeremiah wrote, "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" (Jeremiah 17:9, NLT) In other words, says Jeremiah, we've all been diagnosed with spiritual heart disease, and it's just as fatal to our souls as a heart attack is to our bodies.

So what can be done?

### **A Total Transplant**

"Trying harder" to live a good life doesn't work. If your heart has gotten hardened and dark, it's guaranteed that your actions will be, too. It's just like growing a garden: If you plant corn, you can't grow strawberries. And if there's selfishness, pride, hatred and deception rooted deep in your character, that's what you can expect to see acted out in your life, no matter how often you make great-sounding resolutions to do better.

But there's good news: God offers a cure for our spiritual heart condition. When Jesus was preaching 2,000 years ago, He said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor - sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners" (Mark 2:17, NLT). God is a doctor, and if you know you've got a sin-sick heart, He wants to heal you.

And what is God's cure? He offers a complete heart transplant to anyone who needs it! He says, "I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart" (Ezekiel 36:26, NLT).

To get a new heart, you must respond to God's offer of healing - not by following a list of rules or reciting some religious words, but by putting your trust in God's Son, Jesus, who came to earth and lived as a man, was put to death on the cross to pay the penalty for our wrongdoing, and who God brought back from the grave to break the stranglehold of sin and death over your life. When you place your faith in what He's done to heal you, He gives you the new heart you've been longing for.

So if you're worried about your heart, don't wait for another New Year to come. Talk to your "Doctor" today.

# **Talk to Your** "Doctor"

Do you want to talk to God about your need for a new heart? You can start by having a simple conversation with Him. In your own words, acknowledge your spiritual heart disease. Ask Him to forgive you for your sins and help you as you repent of, or turn away from, your old lifestyle. Thank Him for giving you a new, eternal life as you put your faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, and follow Him starting right now.

That conversation is just the beginning. You can continue your journey by reading God's Word in the Bible, sharing your decision with a chaplain, and attending chapel services where you can find the support of other Christian inmates who are seeking to follow Jesus. Finally, Inside Journal would love to hear how this article has impacted you, and get you started with a free introductory Bible study. Write to "How Healthy Is Your Heart?"/Inside Journal, P.O. Box 900, Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900. (P.O. Box 900 is for Bible study requests only. Please send all other letters to Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146).

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■ Needs Spanish lesson

# No Limbs, No Limits

by Zoe S. Erler

ick Vujicic (pronounced "Vooy-cheech") stands out in a crowd, and it's not because of his winning Aussie accent or ruddy good looks. Although it might be the fact that he's missing both arms and both legs that makes others grab a second glance, it's something else that keeps their attention: his calm, confident demeanor sends a loud, clear message. Nick is a man that knows who - and whose - he is.

Born in Brisbane, Australia, 29 years ago, Nick came into the world without arms and legs. His parents received no explanation for their son's disability, and Nick was forced to learn how to live in a world that saw him as a freak of nature. In addition to being bullied as a child, Nick suffered from low self-esteem, depression and loneliness. In his mid-teens, he edged close to committing suicide. But in the midst of his desperation, Nick found Christ ... and hope.

Fourteen years later, Nick has traveled the world, sharing his story of victory and the Gospel of Jesus Christ with millions. The author of *Life Without Limits* (2010) and the star of the award-winning short film *The Butterfly Circus* (2009), Nick views his handicap as a vehicle to share God's love with others.

Not long ago, *Inside Journal®* (IJ) had the privilege of asking Nick a few questions about his unusual journey.

**IJ:** How did you come to accept yourself the way you are?

Vujicic: It was after reading John, chapter 9, in the Bible. I was 15 when I gave my life to Jesus. I knew I had to make my life right with Him but I blamed Him for my pain. I read how Jesus said that the blind man was born that way so that the works of God would be revealed through him. I said to God that if He had a plan for that man, I certainly believed that He had one for me. I totally surrendered the 'needing to know the plan' idea and trusted in Him one day at a time. I realized God wasn't the one who gave me this pain. But what was intended for bad, God turned into good.

**IJ:** What is one thing you can do that most people wouldn't expect?

**Vujicic:** Open a can of Coke with my teeth.

**IJ:** How do you overcome tough days and situations?

**Vujicic:** By never losing hope and having faith. Faith is believing without seeing or feeling. I never lose my hope because God never changes, but there are still times of fear or uncertainty. In these moments, I remind myself of all the times I got through other troubles and that God was always there.

**IJ:** What do you do when you feel lonely?

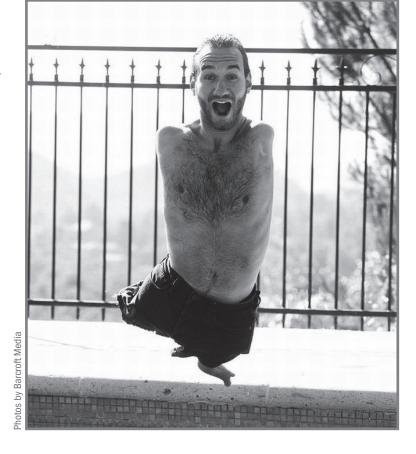
**Vujicic:** If I do feel alone or lonely I remind myself [of] the truth of my value, my purpose and my destiny, all the while being thankful for what I do have instead of being angry for what I don't have. I have God on my side. That is a strong part of my faith and my reality.

*IJ:* At many of your speaking events, you allow people to hug you. Why?

Vujicic: The hug I'll never forget was during one of my first speaking engagements when a girl was crying and asked if she could just come up and give me a hug. She came forward in front of everyone and gave me a hug and thanked me because she said that no one has ever told her that she was loved or beautiful the way she was. Hugging disarms people generally, but especially with people who don't know how to exactly greet me.

IJ: I know you're speaking at California State Prison, Centinela. What do you plan to tell the men in the audience?

Vujicic: Jesus forgives all sins, and that there are people outside of those prison gates who are more trapped than them on the inside. Prisoners who are depressed and scared need to know the truth of their value, purpose and destiny. God has the love to turn our broken pieces into something beautiful if we trust Him. ■





# **Rare Decline in US Prison Population**

he numbers of adults serving time in federal, state and county facilities or under community supervision fell by 1.3 percent in 2010, according to an official government report. It was the largest yearly drop in the prison population after four decades of dramatic increases. While the drop is significant, the United States still has the largest prison population in the world, with 2.3 million adults currently incarcerated, and an additional 4.9 million on probation or parole.

While the overall prison population decreased, it did not go down evenly in all geographic areas. California (down 6,213), Georgia (down 4,207), New York (down 2,031) and Michigan (down 1,365) had the largest drops. Federal prisons, along with half of all states, actually saw their prison populations rise during this year of record decreases,



although the increase in the federal prison population – less than one percent - was the smallest percentage increase since 1980.

On the surface, the shrinking of the prison population was largely due to a dramatic decrease in the number of probationers, as well as a decline in the number of people being held in state prisons and county jails. These drops can be further traced to the actions of state and local governments which, in light of falling tax revenues, have been forced to reduce prison populations because of a lack of funding.

Nationwide, there were 497 inmates for every 100,000 residents in 2010, a figure that has declined every year since peaking in 2007. Black males were the most likely group to be incarcerated, with 3.1 percent being held in

state or federal prison, compared to 1.3 percent of Hispanic males and 0.5 percent of Caucasian males. Across all racial groups, males were 14 times more likely to be incarcerated than females.

The number of juvenile inmates in state custody also declined in 2010, as did the number of persons held who were not U.S. citizens.

This article is based on a recent report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, a division of the U.S. Department of Justice.



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INSIDE JOURNAL® is published 4 times a year by Prison Fellowship Ministries, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790, www.prisonfellowship.org • (703) 478-0100

Editor, Alyson R. Quinn; Writers, Ron Humphrey, Lennie Spitale, Alyson R. Quinn, Zoe S. Erler; Graphic Designer, Christy Voelkel

A member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, and the American Correctional Association.

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# PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS VOLUME 21, NO. 2 SPRING 2012

# A 'Shot Caller' Comes Clean

by Zoe S. Erler

s he wiped the fingerprints off his second carjack job, the cops surrounded Crips leader James Howard Jr. and yelled at him to throw his hands in the air. He fumbled for a non-existent gun, hoping they would fire. Instead, he heard a strange voice in his head: Pray. Startled, James shrugged it off. He felt trapped in the hustling, the gangbanging, the double life. This was his out. He held his breath for the shot that he hoped would end his life.

### **Becoming "The Man"**

Fifteen years earlier, James moved from Philadelphia's organized crime scene to the scrappy neighborhoods of south L.A. To survive on the streets and to earn respect, he joined the Crips.

Starting out as a "thug," he threw around his six-foot-two, 280-pound frame. He advanced quickly from selling drugs, to "running" drugs, to stealing semis filled with anything he could sell quickly: electronics,

truck tires, toys. It was nothing for him to make \$20,000 in a week. He was known as "The Man" and the "shot caller," and any gangster who wanted to make some cash knew he had to talk to James. At any given time, he could have between 20 to 25 thugs at his disposal.

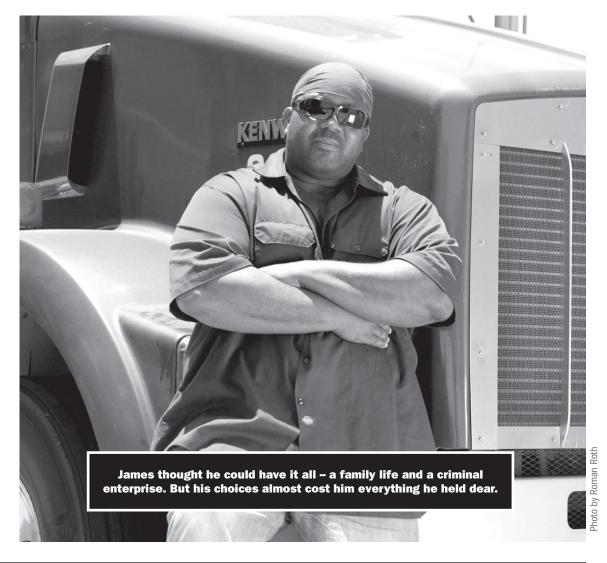
On the side, he worked as a licensed truck driver, which provided an easy cover if he ever got caught. And on the other side of town, he played the family man in a nice condo that he had purchased in Long Beach for his then girlfriend Mary and their four daughters.

### **A New Shot Caller**

The police didn't shoot James that day in 1998. Instead they attacked him with pepper spray and threw him in jail, where thoughts of growing old in prison haunted him and thoughts of suicide tempted him.

I'm not going to die of old age, James promised himself. I'm gonna go in there stealing, killing, whatever it would take for somebody to kill me, but I'm

Continued on page 2



# **Anger: Ally or Enemy?**

by Kay Camenisch

said anger is the only acceptable emotion in prison. There are many reasons to be angry behind bars: loss of freedom, disrespect from fellow inmates, and so-called friends and family that have vanished.

Besides, some days it seems if you aren't angry, you'll get run over. You don't dare let your guard down and show a weak underbelly. Anger can seem like your best friend.

former inmate

In contrast, what the Bible says about anger seems strange. Ephesians 4:31 says, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger ... be put away from you, along with all malice." Put all anger away? What's wrong with being tough when you're in a tough environment?

God apparently knew we'd



Anger is everywhere in prison, but is it all it's cracked up to be?

ask. He answers the question in James 1:20. He says, "The anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." Righteousness is talking about being in right – or healthy – relationships with God and with people around you. Healthy relationships build others up and make them better people.

Instead of building people up, anger tears them down. It destroys relationships. It may achieve your immediate goal, but it leaves destruction in its wake. If we want peace, we need to build up individuals and relationships.

## **Responding Without Anger**

If that's the case, how do we respond when someone threatens or wrongs us? Jesus said, "Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:39). Does that sound like a recipe for disaster?

Before you picture what could happen if you turn the other cheek, consider David. David lived in Bible times and tried to please God and the king, Saul. Saul was jealous of David and commanded his men to kill him. Even though an army was after him, David saw God as his shield. He ran to God and took refuge in Him, and God kept

him from harm.

The Lord will be our shield and deliverer, too. We don't have to be angry to defend ourselves. Jesus promised that He will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). No matter what situation we're in, He is available to protect and deliver us if we run to Him.

I recently heard of a former inmate – we'll call him Jose – who was alone in a restaurant, cleaning up after the lunch crowd. It was almost three hours before the supper rush when four local toughs came in and spread around the room, moving toward him. Jose figured he could take three of them out. He instinctively grasped the neck of a bottle on a nearby table. He was ready.

But a thought crossed Jose's

Continued on page 2



### 'Entertaining Angels'

2012 issue of *Inside Journal*. As always, I read every article and found them both informative and inspiring. When I read your article "Entertaining Angels" and read the part about Angel Tree and wanting to hear from those that have benefited from the program, I thought I'd share my story.

I've been in and out of prison age of 17. Prior to that, I was in and out of juvenile system for several years. A story I'm sure you've heard a thousand times. Now at the age of 35 with 7 years in on a 24-year sentence, I have given my life to the Lord! It's definitely a process, but I've come to the realization that the only true change (that I seek in my life) can come through God! As to the gifts for us prisoners and our children ... Angel

I just finished reading the Winter

since 1993 when I first fell at the Tree!?! I've used its services

### dia, asking inmate authors to submit their manuscripts. Since then we've learned that many of you had your manuscripts returned to

gize to you for the inconvenience. If you want to resubmit a manuscript or inquire about its status, please write to Revive World Media, 5752 Thornbriar Lane, Fort Wayne, IN 46385.

In a past edition, we ran an ad for a group called Revive World Me-

you by the Postal Service, or you never heard back. We called Revive

when their building was under construction. They asked us to apolo-

World Media, and they said that their mail service was interrupted

lifetime, he registered on the prison books as "not affiliated," and headed for the chapel, now

a marked man. Despite James's inexperience as a Christian, the chaplain appointed him as the head deacon, giving James a chance to blossom under the guidance of more mature deacons as well as volunteers from Prison Fellowship, who led weekend-long seminars.

As James grew in his faith, he also stayed safe. Not only was he never directly threatened by members of his former gang or rivals, but he also gained so much credibility on the yard that he began to act as a go-between for correctional staff and gang leaders.

## Cred on the Homefront

Meanwhile, Mary, pregnant and alone with her daughters, had slipped off the ledge of uppermiddle-class living and fallen into poverty and homelessness. During Christmas of 1999, while temporarily living with Mary's sister, the family received a visit from two Angel Tree® (See the back page to learn all about Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program for inmates and their children) volunteers who brought gifts to the girls on James's behalf, and something else.

"I didn't want them to leave," Mary said. "They had such a graceful presence to them that it was wonderful ... it was just the godly presence their door. I was also sent a nice Christmas card to let me that the gifts had been delivered. I was informed that I had two very wellbehaved and polite children. And that was a big blessing for me.

**Letters to the Editor** 

for a number of years. I have a

nine-year-old son who lives with

his mom in Colorado, and every

chance I get, I put in for Christ-

mas presents for my son through

Angel Tree. And let me tell you. I

am very grateful for the time and

effort that those at Angel Tree

put forth to make it possible for

fathers like me to put a present

under the tree for our kids! It's a

drag that I can't be there for my

son, but at least through Angel

Tree I can let him know that I

love him! That's huge for both

I was given a chance through

the Angel Tree to choose a gift

through the chapel at Broward

Cl. My children ages 11 and

13 were given some very nice

gifts. I was in total shock. They

were blessed by Angel Tree and

were very happy campers. Angel

Tree even delivered them to

**Editor's Note** 

Joshua S., Arizona

me and him!

- Susan C., Florida

### **'Leniency for Veterans'**

I just read "Leniency for Veterans Growing in U.S. Courts." I recoiled in shock at the headline. I'm all for considering mitigating circumstances in individual cases, but vehemently opposed to pigeon-holing of any kind. No one should get special treatment just because they fall into this group or that category. Be grateful to our nation's heroes and protectors? Certainly! But don't give all veterans lighter sentences just because they are veterans. It's not fair, it's not right, it's not just. It's a travesty.

- Larry E., Florida

### Anger: Ally or Enemy? Continued from page 1

mind, Do you want to be like you used to be? He froze. He enjoyed the freedom he'd found in Christ. He didn't want to go back to the old lifestyle.

He slowly put the bottle back on the table and took a deep breath. Watching. Waiting.

The door opened. A couple walked in and sat down at a table. It opened again and more people entered.

The troublemakers turned and walked out the door. Jose was amazed. He had waited, and God had delivered him.

We all have a choice. Do we want to continue our old life? Or, like David and Jose, are we willing to put down our weapons and trust God to be our defense?

### When you're threatened or tempted to be angry, stop and ask yourself:

- · Will anger make my life better, or will it keep me in the same old rut?
- Who is better able to protect me? Myself? Or the One who made me and promised to be my shield?

When Bad Things Happen We have all known people who seem to listen and obey God, but

terrible things happen to them. Why? Where's God for them?

A glimpse at the life of Joseph – whose story is told in the book of Genesis - shows how we can trust God to use even bad things for good, even when we don't understand why God would allow them to happen. Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt by his jealous older brothers. While serving faithfully as a slave, Joseph was falsely accused and thrown into prison, where he remained for years. Joseph didn't know what God's plans were for him, but he chose to live righteously, and God honored him. God made Joseph second to the king of Egypt, allowing Joseph to save his family from starvation during a famine.

After 13 years of hardship, Joseph finally saw his brothers again when they came to him for food. They were afraid of Joseph, but he told them not to fear, that God sent him to Egypt to preserve life. He later said, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

In the same way, God can use your hard circumstances for a great purpose if you place your trust in Him - even when it seems like His promises of protection and help don't look the way you thought they would.

Kay Camenisch is the author of Uprooting Anger, a Bible study to identify roots of anger and thus overcome it.

not going to die of old age. But then James heard the voice again. Pray. He couldn't refuse God again.

'Shot Caller' Comes Clean

Continued from page 1

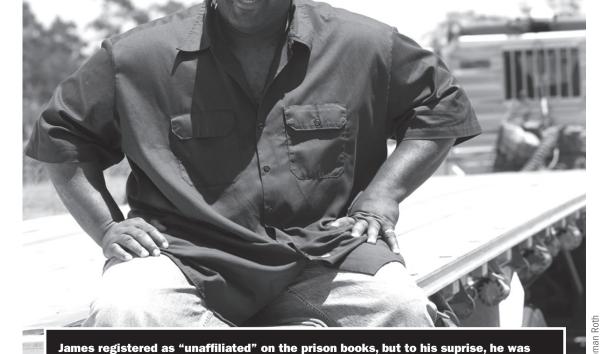
"I felt God's hand come through and touch my heart," he says. "I just stood up and I said, 'Whatever you want, I'll do it.' "

Once in prison at the Correctional Treatment Facility (CTF) in Soledad, James faced a potentially danger-

# "I'm not going to die of old age,"

James promised himself. "I'm gonna go in there stealing, killing, whatever it would take for somebody to kill me, but I'm not going to die of old age."

ous dilemma: associate with his gang brothers in prison or break away and take his stand as a Christian - leaving him unprotected. Taking the risk of his



that they brought. Not the presents, the presence."

In September 2003, James came home. Neither James nor Mary wanted the worldly relationship they had once had. Having married in prison, the couple was excited to begin raising their family according to God's blueprint for life. James started leading his daughters - mostly grown up now - in

evening Bible studies that sometimes went on for several hours.

never threatened. Instead he became a trusted go-between for inmates and staff.

James also began attending Harvest Bible University and was recently ordained as a pastor. And he found a job with a trucking company, this time with no hidden motives.

But James always wanted to go back to prison - as a volunteer. In 2009, James, then 46, returned to prison for the first time

as a trained mentor with Prison Fellowship for an Operation Starting Line evangelistic outreach at the prison in Tehachapi.

Today James stays busy calling the shots for Prison Fellowship's prisoner reentry team in Los Angeles and mentors several ex-prisoners himself. He also serves as a pastor at a church in Long Beach and runs a transitional living center for men.

# Finding the 'Unsinkable' Ship

by Alyson R. Quinn

hey said she was
"unsinkable." When
the RMS *Titanic* left
an English seaport on
April 10, 1912, for its
first voyage, the ocean
liner had 2,200 people aboard,
from famous millionaires to poor,
working-class families.

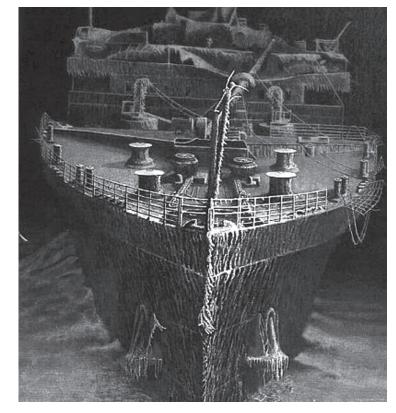
Especially for the first-class passengers, life was good on the *Titanic*. Men and women dressed in silk and diamonds to eat in the fancy dining room while a band played live music. The ship also had libraries, a gymnasium, and even a swimming pool. A first-class cabin cost more than \$4,000, or \$100,000 in today's money!

But the luxury wouldn't last long. On the fourth night of the *Titanic*'s trip across the ocean – almost exactly 100 hundred years ago – she was going close to full speed, even though other ships tried to warn her captain that the water was filled with dangerous icebergs.

Still hurrying toward its destination, the "unsinkable" *Titanic* struck an iceberg, tearing a gash along its metal side. Within hours, the huge ship filled with water, cracked in half, and sank like a stone. Because there were not enough lifeboats for all the passengers, 1,500 people drowned.

### **Crying From the Depths**

Once it sank, the wreckage of the *Titanic* disappeared, seemingly for all time. The once-proud ship now lies 12,500 feet below the surface, broken, turning to rust, and surrounded by thick blackness. Twelve thousand feet is incredibly deep. At that depth, the water pressure is so great that it can crush a human body.



No sunlight breaks the gloom, and everything is dark. Anything lost there is lost forever.

Like the ocean, life has its depths – situations that seem so awful or impossible, you feel the pressure will crush you. One of the writers of the Bible faced a situation like that. He wrote a psalm (another word for a song) with these lyrics: "From the depths of despair, O LORD, I call for your help. Hear my cry, O Lord. Pay attention to my prayer." (Psalm 30, NLT)

How did the writer of that song get to such a dark place? Like the captain of the *Titanic*, who ignored the warnings of others and slammed into an iceberg, the writer was at least partially responsible for the terrible situation he found himself in. In the next line of the song, he says, "LORD, if you kept a record of our sins, who, O Lord, could ever survive?"

Sin - the harmful thoughts, actions and attitudes that resulted

in broken relationships between the writer, God, and other people – is what landed him in such a tough spot. He knew his problem with sin was so huge, he couldn't make it through life unless someone reached out a hand to pull him back to the surface. He cried out to God to forgive him and show him a new way to live saying, "But you offer forgiveness, that we might learn to fear you. I am counting on the LORD; yes, I am counting on him."

#### **God's Submarine**

But can you ever sink so deep that rescue is impossible? Are some crimes so bad that the people who commit them are lost forever – like the wreck of the *Titanic*?

Before exploring that question, let's return to the *Titanic*. What ever happened to it? In 1985, after a long search, a team of French and American scientists actually found the wreck of the famous ship by using sonar and

special underwater cameras. In 1986, a high-tech, deep-diving submarine named DSV Alvin was used to actually take people back to the *Titanic* for the first time in 74 years! A large piece of the *Titanic* was even brought to the surface in the 1990s, and researchers have managed to bring back thousands of items from the wreck to be studied and displayed.

Like those researchers who found a way to reach the Titanic, God has found a way to reach every man and woman, no matter what crime he or she has committed (and we have all sinned incarcerated or not). Two thousand years ago God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the middle of all the pain, hatred, sickness, grief and war in the world. Jesus was both fully human and fully God. He lived a sin-free life, performed miracles - like healing the sick and raising the dead, and taught people about God, His Father. Because He upset a lot of people by claiming to be God's Son, He was betrayed by a close friend, railroaded through an unjust trial, and put to death on a cross, the way the worst criminals were executed back then.

Jesus' death was unfair, but it wasn't an accident. God planned it, because when Jesus died on the cross, He died in our place, taking the sentence that we all deserve for our sins. And when God brought Him back to life (you can read the eyewitness testimony of Jesus' life, death and resurrection in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), Jesus conquered death forever. Now, whoever believes that Jesus died and rose again and accepts Him into their life as Lord will have a renewed heart and spirit here on earth and eternal life in heaven. Jesus' death covers all sin - and all sinners!

No one has sunk too deep for Him to save; Jesus is God's submarine, sent to find you. ■

# Climb into the Lifeboat

Hundreds died because the *Titanic* wasn't carrying enough lifeboats. The shipbuilders never thought the ship would sink, so they didn't plan a way for everyone to be saved in the case of a disaster. But God has a plan to rescue you! If you have never gotten to know Jesus before, you can start with a simple prayer like this one:

God, I know I've messed up. My life is a wreck, and I'm down in the depths! But I believe that Jesus died for sinners like me. I ask You to come into my life today and teach me to live life according to Your good plan for me and for the world.

If you asked God into your life, or if you want get to know Him better, *Inside Journal* wants to help you. You can enroll in a free correspondence Bible study - and get a Bible, if you don't have access to one - by writing to "Unsinkable," Crossroad Bible Institute, PO Box 900, Grand Rapids, MI 49509. (For all other questions or comments, write to *Inside Journal*, PO Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146).

# **Devastating Prison Fire in Honduras**

by Alyson R. Quinn

deadly blaze swept through an overcrowded prison in Honduras on Valentine's Day, killing inmates who remained trapped inside. Others barely escaped by forcing their way through the tin roof.

One of the worst prison disasters in history, the fire claimed the lives of more than 350 people. It reportedly began around 11:00 p.m. on February 14 when two inmates were fighting over a mattress. One of them set the mattress on fire, and the flames spread to the densely packed wooden bunk beds, which were stacked to the ceiling.

"It [was] a terrible scene," said a government official, adding that it would be necessary to use dental records and DNA to identify the remains of many of those who perished. Honduran President Porfirio Lobo said he had asked the director of the Comayagua prison and the head of the national prison system to step down temporarily to guarantee a full and fair investigation of the fire.

He vowed to "take urgent measures to deal with this tragedy, which has plunged all Hondurans into mourning."

Prison Fellowship in Honduras has responded by coordinating with the Penitentiary of Comayagua to donate 500 kits of clothes (shirts, pants and boxers), towels, and hygiene products to the 496 inmates who survived. PF Honduras also supported the grieving families who traveled to Tegucigalpa to identify the bodies. Most of these families were very poor and had no supplies and no place to stay. PF Honduras delivered blankets, soap, toilet paper, and diapers for the young children of family members.



**Inside Journal | Spring 2012** 

# **Angel Tree Celebrates 30 Years**

by Alyson R. Quinn

ngel Tree, the
Prison Fellowship
program started
by former bank
robber Mary

**Kay Beard**, is turning 30 this year. Through this unique program serving inmates' children, more than 9 million children in the United States have received a gift on behalf of their incarcerated parent.

Angel Tree founder Mary Kay Beard grew up on a farm in Alabama. She learned to shoot a gun while rabbit hunting with her brothers. But as she got older, she took a greater interest in firearms, becoming an expert in everything from a .22 to a .357 Magnum. As a young woman, she married a man that she met on a blind date, only to discover months later that he had a secret life. He was an

expert safecracker. He taught Mary Kay everything he knew. Soon, the newspapers were referring to the shotgun-wielding Mary Kay as the "Bonnie Parker of Alabama" for a string of robberies that landed her on the FBI's Most Wanted List. Arrested in June of 1972, at age 27, she quickly collected 11 federal indictments and 35 charges against her. She was convicted of grand larceny and armed robbery. She would spend a total of six Christmases behind bars.

### **The Forgotten Victims**

On the three Christmases that she spent at the Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women in Alabama, local church groups brought the inmates gifts of toothpaste and soap. Intrigued, Mary Kay watched as her fellow prisoners wrapped up the small gifts and gave them to their children at the Christmas visit.

"Most children wouldn't think much of such small gifts, but in prison there was such joy on their faces!" says Mary Kay. "It didn't really matter to them what they got; it was from Mama."

Mary Kay began to read the Bible in prison. She started a personal relationship with God, and her life turned around completely. After being paroled, Mary Kay accepted Prison Fellowship's challenge to become their first Alabama state director in 1982. One of her assignments was to create a Christmas program for prisoners. At one of her speaking engagements, a conversation with an ex-prisoner's daughter solidified the program's focus.

"What about the inmates' kids?" the woman asked. "They are the real victims."

Mary Kay recalled the toiletries that prisoners gave their children on Christmas. So she and a crew of volunteers began Once a notorious bank robber, Mary Kay founded an outreach to prisoners' kids.

creating a program to provide real gifts for prisoners' children.

### **The First Angel Tree**

Their plan was to erect a Christmas tree at Birmingham's Brookwood Mall, encouraging shoppers to buy presents for specific children. Then someone suggested writing the children's names on paper ornaments shaped like angels, creating an "Angel Tree!"

Mary Kay helped cut out 100 paper angel ornaments and then visited prisoners to invite them to sign up their children.

"God never wastes anything," Mary Kay says. "He used my own criminal past to give me credibility in their eyes. And they trusted us."

Mary Kay called the caregivers of the children and asked what they wanted for Christmas. Then, she wrote each child's name and his or her gift preference on an angel ornament.

On the day after Thanksgiving, the busiest retail day of the year, the first Angel Tree greeted shoppers at the top of the mall's escalator. An advertisement in the *Birmingham News* had notified readers of the

project. Many of the store owners agreed to offer a 10-percent discount to shoppers who bought their Angel Tree gifts at their stores.

The response was overwhelming. That weekend, shoppers took all 100 angels to buy gifts. So Mary Kay visited more prisons, called more caregivers and put more angels on the tree.

She and the volunteers wrapped gifts and made sure they would get to the right child. Then Mary Kay called the caregivers of the prisoners' children to pick up the presents. She mobilized volunteers to take gifts to children who lived far away.

That year 556 children received gifts, but the effects spread even farther. The next year, Angel Tree branched out to 12 states and soon became a church-based program. In the past three decades, the Angel Tree program has grown dramatically. It serves children in every state in the Union, and it has helped more than nine million children feel loved by an incarcerated parent at the holidays. It is now Prison Fellowship's most popular program.



# REGISTER YOUR CHILDREN for Angel Tree 2012

**How Angel Tree Works** 

Angel Tree works like this: You fill out an application asking Angel Tree to give your child a gift from you at Christmas (you can suggest what kind of gift you think your child would like). During the summer, your chaplain collects all the applications and sends them to Angel Tree. In the fall, Angel Tree volunteers call the person who takes care of your child to verify what gift your child would like to receive. Before Christmas, Angel Tree volunteers will buy and wrap the gift. The gift will be delivered to your child's home or given to your child at an Angel Tree Christmas party. Your child will be told that the gift is from vou - their mom or dad who loves them!

## **Give Your Child a Gift**

It might still be spring, but now is the time to sign your children up to receive a Christmas present from you through Angel Tree.

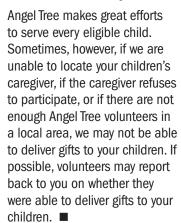
Applications must be postmarked by August 15. You can ask your chaplain for an application.

There are some important restrictions to the Angel Tree program, so please read carefully before filling out an application:

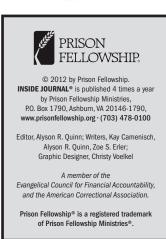
- 1) You **must** be the child(ren)'s father, mother, stepfather or stepmother.
- 2) There **must not be a court order** restricting your contact with the child(ren) or their caregiver(s).

- 3) Your child(ren) must live in the United States.
- 4) Your child(ren) must be **18** years old or younger.
- 5) The form must be filled out completely and legibly.
- 6) The form must be signed.
- 7) The form must be post-marked by **August 15, 2012**.

Get an application and sign your kids up today! A special gift from you at Christmas will help them know that you love them, and it will connect them with a local church that can come alongside your family in your absence. Best of all, it will give them an opportunity to experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ.







# SPECIAL: CHUCK COLSON MEMORIAL EDITION BYTH CHUCK COLSON MEMORIAL

PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS

**VOLUME 21, NO. 3** 

**SUMMER 2012** 

# **The Glorious Defeat of Chuck Colson**

by A.R. Quinn

t Maxwell Federal Prison Camp in 1974, Chuck Colson sat in the dayroom focused on writing a letter.

A prisoner named Archie suddenly called out, "Colson!" Everyone went quiet.

"Colson!" Archie said again. A tall, strongly built inmate, he loomed over President Nixon's former "hatchet man."

"What are you going to do for guys like us when you get out?" he demanded.

Chuck promised he would never forget the men at Maxwell.

"Bull!" Archie said, throwing down the deck of cards he had been playing with. "Big shots like you get out and forget little guys like us."

## Becoming 22326

Before Chuck became federal inmate number 22326, there was nothing in his life story to suggest that he would end up in prison. Raised near Boston, Mass., he graduated from Brown University, went on to become the youngest captain in the U.S. Marines Corps, and earned a law degree with honors. After that, he entered politics, a field for which he had a natural talent.

By 1969, Chuck reached the high point of a dramatic climb to influence and prestige. As special counsel to President Nixon, he was one of the most powerful men in the country – until it all came crashing down.

When the Watergate scandal broke, Chuck found himself at the center of the storm. His name was dragged through the mud by the press as one of the "Watergate Seven."

Under the pressure, Chuck retired into private life, but the threat of prosecution on Watergate-related charges still haunted him and his family.

At this critical moment, a close friend gave Chuck a copy of *Mere Christianity*, a

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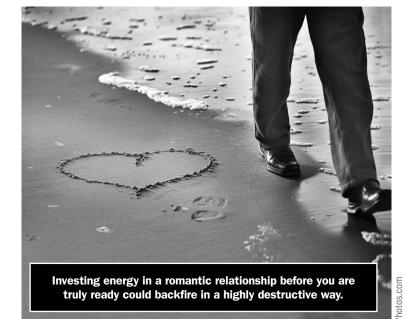
A political scandal brought Chuck Colson, the White House's former "evil genius," to his knees, but serving federal prison time was NOT the end of his story.

# **Looking for Love that Lasts**

by John Byrne

risons and jails are some of the most overcrowded places on the planet - and yet also the loneliest. You're isolated from people you care about. Except for the occasional visit or phone call - if you are lucky - they continue their lives without you. You hunger for a touch from the outside world. To cope with the loneliness, many inmates turn to romantic relationships. They seek out a pen pal of the opposite sex. They try to rekindle romance with an old flame. They may even have more than one relationship going at the same time.

Prison romances rarely end well. As the director of a reentry program, I have seen too many inmates enter a relationship with high hopes, only to have it crash and burn around them. So how do you find love that lasts?



When I talk to inmates, I offer a two-pronged approach: While you're incarcerated, don't date, and when you're released, wait.

# Reasons Not to Date before Release

While there are exceptions to every rule, most inmate relation-

ships are emotionally unhealthy, with an extremely high risk for co-dependency. In a co-dependent romantic relationship, one person is often controlling and manipulative, and the other person feels like they need to save their romantic partner. Like with an addiction to drugs,

you may even realize that a co-dependent relationship is hurting you, but you feel like you simply can't get out of it, and you keep making excuses to continue it.

In contrast, healthy romantic relationships are based on a mutual love, respect, sacrifice, and freedom. It is impossible to have that kind of supportive, equal partnership in a relationship that is actually based on extreme emotional need and vulnerability.

Many inmate relationships are based upon questionable motives. In a healthy romantic relationship, both partners will want what is best for each other. When you are considering a romantic relationship, try to do an honest assessment of your motives. Do you truly want what is in the other person's best interests? Or are you just out to make yourself feel better? Even worse, are you looking for

someone to add money to your account?

# Reasons to Wait – Even after Release

There's nothing like the feeling of freedom. When you walk out the gates, your adrenaline starts pumping. The first time a person of the opposite sex smiles at you and shows interest, you're over the moon. Why not go for it? When I talk to inmates who are about to parole or max out, I encourage them to wait 12 months before starting a relationship. Waiting is hard, but it will pay off, and here's why:

Before you can have something to offer, you need to get yourself established. The first months out of prison will be hard enough without adding the pressure of a romantic relationship. Spend that time laying the foundation for your new life: find a job; go to your appointments; find housing; reestablish relationships with your family or your kids; if you are

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# **Paying Tribute to Chuck**



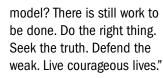
n the morning of Wednesday, May 16, I walked into a huge stone building packed with people. While this description could fit many of the prisons I regularly visit, this time I was walking down the center aisle of the Washington National Cathedral next to Patty Colson, the woman Prison Fellowship founder Chuck Colson treasured as his wife for 48 years.

As Chuck's family and friends reflected on his life. I marveled at how every pew was filled with people whose lives Chuck had touched.

When Chuck died on April 21, 2012, he left us a legacy of faith, courage, and advocacy for his fellow convicts. The Inside Journal newspaper you're holding in your hand is just one small piece of that legacy.

On the front page of each edition, the *Inside Journal* editorial staff likes to publish a "transformed life story," an example of how, by God's grace, everyone's life can be redeemed and made like new again. This time, in tribute to our departed brother, the staff decided to tell the inspiring story of how God redeemed Chuck Colson, the political trickster who came out of a federal prison camp to found the world's largest prison

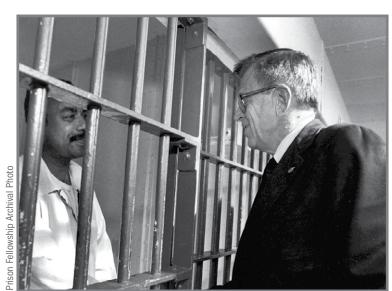
More than a brief article. perhaps the best tribute we can offer Chuck is to follow his example. As Chuck's daughter, Emily, said during the service: "What will we do in the shadow of such an extraordinary role



What about you? Did Chuck's life make a difference in yours? Did he inspire you to seek the truth, do the right thing, or live a more courageous life? We'd love to hear about it.

"Remembering Chuck" PO Box 1790 Ashburn, VA 20146-1790

**Chief Executive Officer Prison Fellowship Ministries** 



# by Jim Liske

a Christian, find a good church community where you can serve and be accepted. Once you line those things up, you'll have much more to offer the right kind of romantic partner – one who will support you and help you make wise choices about the future. Plus, after a year, your emotions will stabilize, and you will be able to go into a relationship with a clear head.

**Love That Lasts** 

Continued from page 1

A bad relationship will wreck your reentry. No one walks out of prison thinking, I can't wait to go back. So why do so many well-meaning ex-prisoners go right back to prison within days or weeks of being released? Bad romantic relationships top of the list of reasons why people fail to stay out. When you get caught up trying to please another person, it's easy to lose focus and compromise your commitments. You take just one drink or just one hit, and before you know it, you're back playing the same old game - with the same old consequences.

Good things come to those who wait. Waiting is hard, but if you want a real relationship that will last, it's the best way to go. If you want to date and eventually marry a person of quality, first you need to prove you are ready, too, and you can only do that over time. When you think you might be ready to date

(again, 12 months is a good standard), find a mature, honest mentor, family member, or pastor you can trust to be straight with you. Ask them if they think you're ready to date. If they see no issues, you can give it a try. If they say "no," but you decide to do your own thing anyway, that should be a big red light! You may need to work on developing the maturity and patience that are required to have a healthy. loving relationship with a

member of the opposite sex.

Let me leave you with a story about a friend named "Andre," who's been out for six months and doing well with his reentry plan. Recently, someone showed interest in him romantically; the opportunity tempted him. What did he do? Instead of obeying his own impulses, he waited. He decided to talk to his pastor - and he spent time in prayer. When he did, he sensed God saying to him, I've done so much in your life already. Won't you trust Me that when it's time, I'll bring the right person into your life? Andre listened to those words. Recently he told me, "I've decided to wait until God brings the right person into my life. I'm not going to get ahead of God." ■

John Byrne is the director of the Inner-Change Freedom Initiative in Minnesota. In the next edition, he will offer insights for inmates who already have a spouse.

# The Good News about Hard Time

own devices. It is where most

of us are already headed, even

though we do not yet realize it!

The real sting of hell is

from God for all eternity. This is

something so horrible that the

Bible describes it in terms of

being hopelessly separated

Don't let your time do you."

Interestingly, doing time

(and feeling time "doing" us)

can teach us a lot about the

consequences of sin. That's

because, in a way, we are all

prison cell or in the free world.

doing time – whether in a

## by Johnathan Kana

his place is hell," my friend said. We were both in the chapel choir, and we often talked about the Bible as we walked the track together on the rec yard. One day, the topic of hell came up. My friend thought that hell would probably be a lot like doing time in prison. I asked him to explain what he meant.

"Think about it," he said. "You're stuck in a place you really don't want to be. You can't leave. You're miserable. Time feels like it goes on and on, and when it's done you have nothing to show for it. You can see freedom on the other side of the fence, but it might as well be a million miles away."

I thought about it a moment. He was hitting a nerve.

"But the worst part," he continued, "is that you can't be with the people you really want to be with. You are completely cut off from them Even weekend visits are just a cruel reminder of that terrible fact. You know that you deserve to be here, and that your own decisions put you here, but you can't help resenting the way that you have to be kept separate from everything that makes life worth living." Hell indeed.

## **Hard Time...Forever?**

This, of course, is the definition of "hard time." We convicts know the soul-paralyzing terror of standing before an endless parade of hours and days, keeping us from the people and places we long for. We may not like to admit it, but we all struggle from time to time with a nagging hopelessness that threatens to overwhelm and destroy us. That's why we have that old saying: "Do your time.

The Bible says that we are everlasting fire and gnashing selfish and that we all stand of teeth. Everyone - free or condemned for the thoughts, incarcerated - stands in danger words, attitudes, and behaviors of this fate, but prisoners have a that have separated us from special glimpse of what this kind God. "For all have sinned; all of sentence looks like. As my fall short of God's glorious friend observed that day on the standard" (Romans 3:23 NLT). rec yard, spending an eternity God has appointed a place of separated from God is basically like doing hard time . . . forever. exile for those who permanently reject Him. It is what the Bible

### **Prisoners of Hope**

But God's not done yet. "Come back to the place of safety, all

you prisoners," He exclaims, "for there is yet hope! I promise this very day that I will repay you two mercies for each of your woes!" (Zechariah 9:12).

That wonderful promise comes in a passage of the Old Testament that talks about the Messiah - the anointed King who ushers in a new phase of God's work on the earth. That Messiah is Jesus Christ, God Himself born in the flesh over two thousand years ago, fully human vet also fully divine. Jesus is God's only Son, a man who turned the world upside down with His teachings about God, a man who offended the religious leaders of His day, and was put to death on a cross as

No one expected God's Messiah to die, especially not as a common criminal. His death was itself a crime! But it was necessary because God loved us in our hopeless situation and had a plan to rescue us from that chain bus bound for "the deep South."

a result.

You see, when Jesus Christ suffered and died on the cross for us, He exhausted God's great wrath against our sin. He made a trip to that hellish supermax in our place. The devilish warden of that facility no longer had any claim over us! Then, when God brought His Son back to life three days later, He proclaimed no one would ever have to get on board that chain-bus again.

Do you understand the good news? Your eternal sentence has been suspended! You have been exonerated! No more spiritual "hard time" to serve! The Judge has just issued your full pardon. ■

Ex-prisoner Johnathan Kana completed advanced degrees in biblical studies during his time in prison and on parole. He lives with his wife in central Texas.

# **ETERNITY OR BUST**

The chain bus is waiting for you. You are already locked in the shackles. You are already in line to board . . . But you don't have to get on.

If you will honestly confess your sinfulness and accept Jesus' death as God's seal of pardon, you can start things all over. You can experience inner freedom from this moment - into eternity. God doesn't require you to earn His forgiveness. But He does ask you to **surrender** to Him. You can do that by talking to Him with a simple prayer, like this one:

God. I don't want to live apart from You anymore. I believe Jesus died so that I wouldn't have to stay separated from You. Please come into my life and rescue me. Make me Your child forever. Teach me to live as You would have me live.

If you just asked God into your life—or if you want to get to know Him better, *Inside Journal* would love to help you. You can enroll in a free correspondence Bible study – and get a Bible, i you don't have access to one - by writing to:

> "Hard Time" c/o Inside Journal P.O. Box 1790 Ashburn, VA 20146-1790

## **Defeat of Chuck Colson** Continued from page 1

book by popular British author C.S. Lewis that explores and defends the core beliefs of the Christian faith. The book sparked a series of conversations and encounters that led, finally, to Chuck's conversion.

"I spent an hour calling out to God," Chuck remembered in



2008, describing the night he spent sitting in his car, sobbing and praying. "I did not even know the right words. I simply knew that I wanted Him."

## **Defeat into Victory**

After telling God, "I surrender," Chuck developed a circle of Christian friends. They helped him make the hard decision to plead guilty to obstruction of justice in the Daniel Ellsberg case. A federal judge sentenced Chuck to serve one to three years in prison.

Chuck, who had been on top of the world, now found himself at the bottom - deprived of his freedom and separated from his family. He thought his life was over, and that being labeled a "convict" would kill his chances of doing anything

"God used my greatest defeat for His glory!"

Chuck's experience at a federal prison camp, though painful and for him and his family, wound up awakening helping other inmates.

While spending time with inmates, he realized prison failed to "correct" incarcerated men and women. Many times, it left them more hopeless and criminally minded than before. He wondered what

When he was released in 1975, Chuck tried to figure out what to do next. But he was haunted by the inmates he had left behind, and by the

## **Keeping the Promise**

As he sought God's guidance, Chuck felt led in 1976 to found Prison Fellowship – with the goal of giving hope to prisoners. Over the coming decades, the organization

meaningful with his life. "Was I ever wrong!"

Chuck said decades later.

him to a new passion in life:

he could do to help them.

promise he had made to Archie.

would grow more than he ever dreamed, becoming the largest prison ministry in the country and the world.

Though he also went on to found The Colson Center for Christian Worldview and a popular national radio program, Chuck never forgot his promise. He often visited prisons, speaking with inmates, and he spent every Easter behind bars. In 2011, he even returned to Maxwell and spent Good Friday at a chapel service with incarcerated men. Though the

facility had changed, it brought back strong memories of his own days of incarceration, and it renewed his passion to show men and women that they, too, could come out of prison as

Chuck's love for fellow convicts led him to prisons all over the country and around the world.

positive leaders for society. In March 2012, Chuck fell ill while speaking at a conference. Doctors discovered bleeding on his brain; he had suffered a stroke. Though he showed some initial signs of recovery, Chuck died from complications of the stroke on April 21.

Nationwide, people

Cathedral a few weeks later to celebrate Chuck's inspiring life. At the memorial service, where former inmates rubbed shoulders with members of Congress, the consensus was His glorious purposes. ■

mourned the loss of one of

the most important leaders

of his generation. Hundreds

packed Washington National

clear: Though Chuck had gone through hard times in his life, and had left this earth, neither prison nor death had defeated him. God used both to achieve

# Ready to go deeper? Enroll in Pilgrim Theological Seminary!

OUR MISSION: The mission of Pilgrim Theological Seminary (PTS) is to provide high-quality, inexpensive, and easily accessible opportunities for theological education to men and women throughout the United States, Canada, and the world.

calls hell, and it is actually the

freely choose to go if left to our

very place most of us would

YOUR OPPORTUNITY: Currently, PTS is seeking incarcerated men and women to take part in a tuition-free, undergraduate-level program beginning in the autumn of 2012. The courses that will initially be offered to our incarcerated students come from the Biblical Studies Certificate, one of seven certificates that are required to complete our Bachelor of Christian Leadership degree. The courses in this certificate program include: Principles of Biblical Interpretation, Old Testament I, Old Testament II, The Life and Teachings of Jesus, Acts and Pauline Epistles, and General Epistles and Revelation.

If you are a person that the Lord is calling to church or missionary service, or a person who would like to have a deeper understanding of the Christian faith, we invite you

to consider taking part in the Pilgrim Seminary Program. To receive more information about the program, please write to:

**Keith Smith Coordinator of Community Outreach** Pilgrim Theological Seminary 30 S. Linwood Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15205

Prison chaplains interested in having an ongoing program at the facility they serve should contact Keith@pilgrimseminary.org, or write to the address listed above.

**Inside Journal | Summer 2012** 2 **Inside Journal** | Summer 2012



The many exciting attractions at recent northern California yard events included bike stunts, feats of strength, a comedian, and a real NASCAR race car.

# Yard Events Chase Away 'Folsom Blues'

## by A. R. Quinn

ould you get a bicycle stunt ramp into a prison? How about a NASCAR stock car?

Those were just a couple of the huge hurdles facing Joe Avila and Rick Atchley, regional field staff for Prison Fellowship, when they set out to plan a multiday series of yard events to entertain and inspire inmates in northern California. With access graciously granted by the staff of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Inside Journal® tagged along to capture stories and photos of the events at Old Folsom, the prison made famous by Johnny Cash's hit song, "Folsom Prison Blues."

Folsom State Prison, a couple hours' drive from San Francisco, is not exactly a warm, fuzzy place. The thick, granite walls, made of stone quarried by the original inmates back in the 1800s, go deep into the ground and high into the air. Sharpshooters watch the yard from guard towers. A sign in a

window warns about mandatory strip searches.

But on Saturday, June 9, under a crisp, blue sky, the mood on one of the main yards was light. Before dawn, dozens of volunteers working with Prison Fellowship had braved tough security to build a large stage. They had also brought in a NASCAR stock car and a few stunt ramps.

Inmates who took the opportunity to gather on the yard enjoyed free entertainment, including gospel singer Tim Kepler. His testimony made the crowd stand up and pay attention; years ago, an addiction to cocaine led him to a cramped cell in Folsom. Today Tim is a successful recording artist.

"It's strange to be back at Folsom," he admitted to Inside Journal, but he is willing to do anything to bring hope to people who are still incarcerated.

### Leap of Faith

The Folsom inmates also cheered for an exciting stunt

demonstration by BMX bike legends like Vic Murphy. The biggest crowd-pleaser was a stunt called "the jump of death." Three volunteers lay on the ground shoulder-to-shoulder and, after pretending to miss a few times, the bike stuntman sailed over their heads.

Why would the volunteers give up their weekends to volunteer for a "jump of death"? Matthew, a resident of nearby Folsom, Calif., felt that he wasn't that much different from the men he came to visit.

"Twenty years ago, I probably should have been in [prison]," said the father of two, "God showed me grace ... My biggest hope today is to bring hope to the prisoners and show them the love of Christ."

Dean, a volunteer who performed feats of strength as part of the show, could hardly wait to get through security so he could get inside.

"I consider this a rare opportunity, a privilege," he said. "I would take this over talking in a church. I would take this over a lot of stuff."

### **Message of Hope**

There were several inspirational speakers, including evangelist Andrew Palau and Prison Fellowship President Garland Hunt. They all emphasized the message that, through God, inmates can become leaders for their peers behind bars, as well as having hope for a new future on the outside.

"God has his hand on you," Garland shouted from the stage under a blistering sun, "He's just waiting for you to say, 'yes!'"

Protestant Chaplain Bill Rogowski believed the event would do more than just give inmates a day of fun. He hoped it would also attract more inmates to Folsom's regular chapel services and show the outside volunteers that inmates are just regular people.

Inmates were also an important part of the success of the events. Perhaps the most encouraging part of the day for volunteers at Folsom was the sight of inmates gathered in a circle to ask God's blessing on the day. Inmates at another facility volunteered to work at a

table where people could sign up for in-prison programming, and a few at CSP-Solano even performed on stage! For all the inmates who went the extra mile to get involved, the goal was clear: to make the yard events part of an ongoing campaign to change the attitude and atmosphere of their correctional facilities – for good.

"This prison has been here since 1878," one inmate told *Inside Journal*. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if it didn't have to be here anymore? If we could break the cycle of crime? Right here? Today?"

Whether the events will ultimately help break the cycle of crime remains to be seen, but without doubt, they were an appropriate way to honor the memory of the organization's founder, Chuck Colson. "Several prisoners came up to me during the campaign to thank PF for 'not forgetting them," said regional executive director Joe Avila. "I told them they are what this event was all about – keeping Chuck Colson's promise that he'd never forget them."

# **DOJ Adopts New Rape Standards**

WASHINGTON, D.C.

n May 17, 2012, the U.S. Department of Justice released national standards to help protect inmates from suffering sexual abuse while in custody. The rules, which the DOJ was required to adopt after Congress passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA), have three main goals: to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual abuse. Here is a summary of some of the most important rules:

### **Prevention**

➤ Correctional facilities must have a zero-tolerance policy. ➤ Facilities must have a PREA point person to coordinate compliance.

➤ Facilities must screen all inmates for risk of being sexually abused and make assignments accordingly.
 ➤ Cross-gender pat-downs of

female or juvenile inmates will be prohibited.

Facilities must limit the use of solitary confinement as a way of protecting vulnerable inmates.

### Detection

➤ Inmates will be allowed to report abuse anonymously upon request.

➤ Facilities must develop policies to prevent retaliation against inmates who report abuse or cooperate with an abuse investigation.

### Response

➤ Victims of sexual abuse will have the right to timely physical and mental health care.

Facilities must establish procedures to preserve evidence of an assault, and victims must be offered no-cost forensic exams.

➤ Abusers should be disciplined; staff abusers should be fired if proven guilty.
 ➤ Facilities must keep good records of incidents of sexual abuse.

These standards apply to all facilities under the control of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. State facilities that fail to comply with them may lose some federal funding.

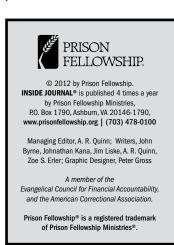
Justice Fellowship, the criminal justice reform branch

of Prison Fellowship, spent a decade pushing for the changes. In a recent article, Pat Nolan, an ex-prisoner and the president of Justice Fellowship, remembered talking about the problem with Prison Fellowship founder Chuck Colson. "[Chuck's] response was immediate and firm," he recalled, "'Pat, we have to get involved in this fight. You and I know the horrors that take place within prison walls, and if we don't speak up, who will?"

Together, Pat and Chuck helped rally support for the end of prison rape. They joined forces with groups as diverse as the ACLU, Human Rights Watch, and the National Association of Evangelicals, to help bring PREA to a floor vote in 2003.

Finally adopting the PREA

standards is an important step toward protecting inmates from sexual abuse, but huge gaps remain. The DOJ estimates that there have been more than 1.8 million cases of rape or sexual abuse in correctional facilities since PREA was passed, and it will take more time for facilities to create and enforce their new anti-rape policies and procedures.



Joni's Strength, p.4

# **FALL 2012** PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS **VOLUME 21, NO. 4**

# Former Addict Finds New Highs

## by Taylor Harris

reddy Cooper had tried everything. He had checked into rehab, gone through detox, and served a four-year sentence for cocaine use. He had even moved from city to city in North Carolina. Every time he crossed a new city limit line, he hoped he could break free from the oppressive addiction that limited his future hopes. Nothing worked.

"They say if you get away from your surroundings, you might change," says Freddy. "But after a while, I'd just fall back into that old habit."

Whether he relocated to Wilmington, Goldsboro, Greensboro, or Kinston, Freddy couldn't find the man he wanted to be.

## **Rock Bottom**

Instead, he found crack cocaine, a newer form of the powder cocaine he'd used. Crack, which promised a powerful high, brought him to an all-time low in 1998.

"It was like I couldn't do any-

thing right," Freddy explains.

He kept promising himself that next time, he'd do the right thing with his paycheck. He'd provide for his family the way he believed a man should.

"Every time I'd get my money, that crack cocaine would just overpower me," he remembers.

On January 14, 2004, Freddy was arrested again.

### "The Best Thing"

As soon as the handcuffs clinked onto his wrists, Freddy knew there was only one move left to make.

"That's when I had made up in my mind what I was going to do," he says. "That I was going to seek God."

He started hanging around inmates who talked about the Bible. For a few hours at a time, they gathered in North Carolina's Wake County Jail to read Scripture and pray.

"I had to make a change from the inside out, not the outside in," says Freddy.

When he was transferred from jail to a correctional

**Continued on page 2** 



Cooper, who tried for years to shake an addiction to crack cocaine.

# **How to Brighten the Holidays**

## by Rev. Keith Smith

pending the holidays in prison can be downright miserable, and Christmas can be

the worst of all. Most of us, if granted one wish on Christmas Day, would simply want to be with our loved ones enjoying a meal, giving and receiving gifts, and having a fun time together. For the vast majority of us, though, that is not going to happen this year. So, what can we do to brighten our days during the Advent season?

First, we can remember "the reason for the season." The time of Advent (the four weeks before Christmas) is a time to think about what Christmas truly means and what we are actually celebrating.

Although many people associate Christmas with Santa Claus, turkey dinners, and



You have the power to give loved ones a gift that won't fit under any tree.

expensive gifts, Christmas is really about celebrating the birth of Jesus, the Son of God who

came to earth and lived among us. And we are also celebrating the expectation that this Jesus

who was born in Bethlehem will someday come again. We celebrate God's great gift to us, Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of John says that "the light (Jesus) came into the darkness of the world, and the darkness will never put the light out." Prisons can be dark places, not because the lights are bad, but because so much misery, loneliness, and sin has been gathered into one place.

But prison life, as dark as it can sometimes be, can never, ever put out God's light that comes in Jesus Christ. This light shines wherever you are, even in the darkest prison. Now that is really something to celebrate!

We give gifts at Christmas as tokens of God's great gift of Jesus Christ to us. If you think that Christmas gifts are about how big something is, or how much something cost, you might have it all wrong. A gift is

only as valuable as the amount of love with which it has been given. A hand-drawn Christmas card from my child might be better than a Rolex watch. The baby Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem was a tiny gift, completely unnoticed by some, but it came with more love than the world has ever known. And what an impact that gift has had! Jesus' coming has influenced the entire course of history and brought hope into millions of lives.

It's pretty hard to give Christmas gifts to our loved ones while we're in prison. But there is a gift you can give that requires no money and doesn't have to make its way through the mail room. It doesn't cost anything to mail and it's faster than Fedex. It is the gift of prayer.

You can give a wonderful and precious gift to your children,

**Continued on page 2** 



### 'Remembering Chuck'

"My name is [T.J.] and I'm a Christian of six years. I would like to say I truly appreciate Prison Fellowship, and all the services that is offered not only me but for my kids. Praise God for someone like our late brother Chuck C. May his legacy live on! We love you Brother Chuck!!! One of the things I appreciate is the Inside Journal ... I thank you, Prison Fellowship, for not forgetting about people like me."

- T.J., Arizona

"I got arrested and caught many cases ... If I didn't come here, I would most likely have been found dead somewhere by now ... Being here, I built a relationship with God, as did Chuck ... Literally, a few days now I've been so worried about what I'm going to do when I'm released

# **Letters to the Editor**

and how I'm going to make it. I have so much to look forward to yet so much holding me back. But reading this story has really put me at ease and let me know that anything is possible. At the end of your article, it was written that his daughter Emily spoke at his service and said 'follow his example.' It touched me. I've been asking God to tell me how to make it when I'm put back into the community and while I read that part my eyes filled with tears and I understood His message."

- Emily, Connecticut

"I found your summer 2012 (Vol. 21, No. 3) Inside Journal in my dorm and read it. The cover caught my attention because Chuck Colson is a part of my life. I so happen to be involved in a very intense study on Christian worldview through Crossroad Bible Institute. The

book of study is Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey's How Now Shall We Live?. I find your article of Chuck to be very true in my mind and belief. He, as his daughter said, was quite a role model."

- Hank, Florida

### 'Bank Robber to King'

"One story in particular touched my soul and gave me hope. It was the story of John Jennings, written by Beth Reid. It made me think to myself that if a man like John can change like that, then there is still hope for me. ... I came into these gates a liar, thief, and a drug addict, and am walking out a Christian, a loving mother, and a high school graduate. All thanks to the Lord Jesus. Keep up the good work on your Journal. It sure helped me!"

- Crystal, Illinois

## **Editor's Note**

At Inside Journal (IJ), we receive many letters each week from inmates asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers - however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, Inside Journal is only available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at PO Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or inside\_journal@pfm.org.

## **How to Brighten** the Holidays

Continued from page 1

or your family, or those around you simply by remembering them by name each day during Advent as you say your prayers to God.

To give the gift of prayer this Christmas start on Thanksgiving Day, thanking God for those who are or have been an important part of your life. Continue to pray for some other person (your children, nieces, nephews, perhaps?) each and every day until Christmas Day. In doing so, you will have given a gift to someone else that no amount of money could ever buy. Remember, there is no prison wall so high or so thick that prayer cannot pass right through it. Your prayers can go everywhere.

For those who haven't been praying very much, you could use this prayer by Jesus as a model:

Our Father, who is in heaven, holy is your name. May your Kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

Please hear my prayer this day as I pray for (name). Please (say here what you wish to say), in Jesus' name. Amen.

We all can rest assured that the God who made the heavens and the earth will hear our prayers and will make sure that your Gift of Prayer gets to the right place this Christmas. ■

Rev. Keith Smith is the dean of the chapel at Pilgrim Theological Seminary.

## **Ways to Pray** for Children

- · Pray for children's physical safety, that they would be well-nourished and protected from violence and threats.
- · Pray for children's emotional safety, that their caregivers would be patient, consistent, and loving.
- · Pray for children's spiritual safety, that God would put positive role models in their lives to point them towards Jesus.
- · Pray for yourself, that God would help you become a positive influence for others, including children.

## **Former Addict Finds New Highs**

Continued from page 1

center, Freddy joined Project Nehemiah, a faith-based reentry program. The inmates who attended Sunday classes received Christ-centered books and worksheets on everything from creating a budget to strengthening a marriage.

"They teach you how to put God first in everything that you do," Freddy explains.

"Every time I'd get my money, that crack cocaine would just overpower me."

Don Fulford, the program chairman of Project Nehemiah, has long worked closely with Prison Fellowship staff in the field to develop effective in-prison programming. He became Freddy's personal mentor. Using Freddy's "CV" or "civilian volunteer" passes earned with good behavior, the two were able to attend church and eat meals together outside prison walls.

"It was the best thing that had happened to me in a long time," Freddy recalls, "'cause I really didn't have anyone who really cared other than my family."

Having served in prison ministry for over 20 years, Don knew Freddy needed his support. He listened to Freddy talk about his difficult past without letting that past define him.

"The really important thing is to encourage and to let them know that they are better than what they have been," says Don.

## Life Renewed

Five years have passed since Freddy was released from prison, and even though he's always on the move, now it's for his job. He drives a cab in Raleigh, where he attends his brother-in-law's church and still keeps in touch with Don.

Freddy chuckles as he describes his new life: "I come to work, go home, study, read my Bible, go to church, go to Bible study, go to Sunday school. That's all I do now."

While he credits God and the lessons he learned in reentry unit with a smooth transition to life outside prison, he has experienced personal loss. Two years after his release, he separated from his wife when she refused to stop using drugs.

Still, he's careful not to condemn old friends struggling with addictions.

"I don't disassociate myself with those people because I have to show them what the Lord's doing for me. If I didn't ...



Freddy's mentor Don (right) helped him talk about his difficult past and find the way to a new future.

then they wouldn't know the Lord could do that for them."

Freddy is returning the favor. While he was incarcerated, his family - which includes his two adult children and several siblings – never shunned him. They kept in touch through letters and, eventually, witnessed God's stunning transformation of this man on the move.

"In his letters, he was talking about what he wanted to do, and he was trying to get things together for when he came home," says Vernon Spinks, Freddy's pastor and brother-inlaw. "And when he came home, that's exactly what he did."

Freddy Cooper, the same man who once struggled to stay in one place, is now anchored to

his church, where he serves as an usher and transports members to and from services.

And while he's come a long way, he hasn't stopped looking forward.

"I hope that my daughters will one day realize that God is the only way to go," says Freddy. "Other than that, I just want to live for the Lord." ■

2

# **Are You Missing the Feast?**

by A. R. Quinn

n 2010 IJ talked with Reginald "Reggie" Crenshaw, then an inmate at **Bibb Correctional Facility** in Alabama with one day of his sentence left to serve. He talked about his plans for after he was released. He couldn't wait to hug his mother for the first time in 16 years and he was eager to eat her down-home cooking. Dreamily, he looked forward to the taste of her southern fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, and sweet potato pie.

Whether your mother's (or grandmother's) cooking was fried chicken, tamales, or lo mein, many inmates fantasize about a post-release feast with all the trimmings. That's not to say that inmates don't also do the best they can while behind bars; in fact, many inmates come up with innovative versions of their favorite recipes using just the items available in the commissary. A Missouri inmate named Adam gave IJ a recipe for "prison pizza" that called for a crust made out of crushed ramen noodles, topped with cheese whiz and slices of dried salami.

The in-prison versions of inmates' favorite recipes are proof of what inmates can achieve when their creativity and talents are channeled in a positive direction; still, with the limited ingredients and equipment available, most would jump at the chance for a good, home-cooked meal. It's a basic desire that cuts across boundaries of race, age, or gender.

## Food for the Spirit

Our bodies can't live without food. If you skip one meal, you



can expect hunger pangs. If you skip two, you can get a headache and suffer dizzy spells. This is your body's way of sending you a message: "Put food in your stomach! You need nourishment!"

You're familiar with your body's hunger signals and how to respond to them (eat!). But can you tell when your spirit is hungry? Like your body, your spirit needs to be fed, and when you're spiritually starving, there will usually be signs, like despair, loneliness, or a sense of longing and emptiness that can never be filled.

When your body is hungry, you give it food. You wouldn't expect to satisfy your craving by digging into a bowlful of tasty gravel or munching on the corner of your mattress. Yet many of us don't know how to feed our souls. When we feel empty, we try to fill ourselves up with drugs, alcohol, pornography, television, or even positive things like education, work, and friendships. These

things fill us up for a little while
– just like gravel or mattress stuffing would fill up your stomach,
technically speaking – but they
don't nourish our souls. As soon
as we come down off the high of
an experience, we're left aching
and empty again, because we
tried and failed to fill our spirits
with something that wasn't spiritual food.

So what will fill the emptiness in your spirit? What is the true "soul food"?

### **Come to the Feast**

When Jesus was on earth – about 2,000 years ago – He spent a lot of time telling people parables, or stories that explain spiritual truths. Once He told a story about a master who was giving a wedding feast. In Jesus' day, weddings were the party of a lifetime. Everybody in town would come to eat and drink as much as they could hold. The master sent invitations to all his neighbors, but they all turned him down. They

# **Soul Food**

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." There's an answer to that deep sense of longing and emptiness in your heart, and that answer is Jesus. He is the ultimate "soul food," and His love is free for the taking. All you have to do is receive it. You can start with a simple prayer like the one below. It's also a good idea to talk to a chaplain, join a Bible study, and start reading the Bible – the story of God's love throughout the ages.

God, my soul is empty and I've been trying to fill it with all the wrong things. I believe Jesus is the Bread of Life, and that He died to save me from my sins. I accept Your invitation to the feast, Your invitation to receive forgiveness because of Your Son's death on the cross for my sins. Please satisfy my soul. Help me to live a new life according to Your plans and purposes.

If you asked God into your life, or if you want to get to know Him better, Inside Journal would love to and help you out! You can enroll in a free correspondence Bible study – and get a Bible, if you don't have access to one through your chaplain or chapel program – by writing to "Soul Food," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790.

all had reasons for why they were just too busy to come. So the man sent his servants into the street and told them to round up everyone they could find on the street corners and in the alleys. The master wanted his house to be full for the party to end all parties.

God is like the master in the parable. He is getting ready to give an unbelievable party, and He wants everyone to be His guest, so that He can fill them with spiritual food and drink that will satisfy their souls forever.

## The Bread of Life

What is the spiritual food and drink that God offers?
Before Jesus was put to death

for a crime He didn't commit, He served His followers a meal of bread and wine. He told them that the bread and wine symbolized His body and blood, which He was about to offer as a ransom to set people free from the power of sin in their lives.

Jesus is the spiritual food and drink God offers us. When we set aside all the junk we've been using to fill our souls, when we offer Jesus control of our lives and ask Him to fill us up, our souls will be nourished. Our cravings will be satisfied.

God has invited you to His feast. Like the neighbors in the story, will you tell Him you're too busy, or will you come in and eat the food He's prepared just for you?

# You can send God's Word to your children! Try our FREE, age-appropriate Bible studies.

■ Help your children learn how God wants them to live! Just write their names and addresses below and we'll send each of them a free lesson. When they mail them back, we'll send the next ■ one. There is no age limit, and you can sign up grandchildren, nieces, nephews – anyone. Sign up now and get them started!

Name of child		Age
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Address		
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3

# **Changing the World from a Chair**

A Q&A with Joni Eareckson Tada **by Zoe S. Erler** 

n 1967, a dive into

too shallow water left 17-year-old Joni Eareckson paralyzed from the neck down. Since her tragic accident, Joni has become a worldrenowned writer and speaker, and - along with her husband Ken Tada - founded Joni and Friends, a global outreach to the disabled community. Recently, Joni fought a successful fight against breast cancer and found new opportunity to trust God. And earlier this year, Joni was awarded the Wilberforce Award for her vigorous advocacy for the sanctity of life, particularly for those with disabilities.

In this issue of IJ, writer Zoe Erler chats with Joni about the secret behind her remarkable fortitude in the face of her trials.

IJ: After your accident, you were stuck in a hospital bed for about a year. You've often spoken about what happened emotionally and spiritually for you during that time. In a nutshell, can you give us a little peek into some of your thoughts, emotions, and what you learned about God during that time?

Joni: I was very athletic, outgoing, active. And suddenly to be lying flat on my back and hear the doctors say you'll never use your hands again, never walk again – I felt like I'd been given a prison sentence. I felt claustrophobic. Many nights I would lie on my bed and fight panic attacks because of the claus-

trophobia. I couldn't even think about the future – couldn't even think about the next day. It was so terrifying to be that confined.

Obviously I sank into depression, but I knew enough about my situation that I knew I would become suicidally despairing if I was reduced to that kind of fear every day. So that's when the Bible really began to make a big difference in my life. While I was in the hospital, Christians would come read to me from God's word. It would bring great peace. I think that was the thing that calmed my troubled heart. For a while, I tried escape - escape into daydreaming, escape into music. But it was the word of God that became such a comfort to me.

IJ: What are some of the ways you experience your dependence on God on a daily basis?

Joni: Every morning when I wake up, 45 years of quadriplegia, I say, "Lord Jesus, I can't do this. I am overwhelmed by it. I don't have a lot of strength for the day, but I can do all things through you as you strengthen me. I can just show up. Get me up facing this day with a bright attitude."

Without Him, I can do nothing anyway. He tells me that I am blessed are if I come to Him in empty-handed spiritual poverty.

IJ: If you could go back in time and have a talk with your 17-year-old self, what would you tell her?

Joni: I would say to lean on God more completely, more wholly.



Joni's world was turned upside down after an accident paralyzed her, but she's found strength and purpose that allow her to serve others.

Don't resist. Don't escape into daydreams. Lean harder into God. That would have saved me a couple of years of depression. Our emotions are so unreliable. So often we tend to live by how we feel. The Bible provides so many anchors, not the least of which is the Psalms, which is a gyroscope for our emotions.

IJ: Have you ever met someone in prison or visited a prison?

Joni: I've spoken in prison many times, often with Prison Fellowship. Wheels for the World – our ministry which provides free wheelchairs to children and adults around the world – has wheelchair restoration centers in 14 different prisons across the U.S.

IJ: Although I'm sure there are differences, I'm guessing there are ways in which those with disabilities can relate to those in prison. Do you have any particular words of wisdom to prisoners?

Joni: In Philippians 1, the Apostle Paul says that his chains helped to advance the Gospel. I so identify with that verse. I could put my name and my wheelchair in there. What's happened to me has really advanced the gospel. If a quadriplegic with chronic pain and breast cancer can advance the gospel, it can encourage those with lesser struggles. I am in chains for Christ.

We all make mistakes. We do stupid stuff. I broke the natural law. I broke the law of gravity. I jumped into the water when it was too shallow. Often prisoners make mistakes they wish they could live over. I can't tell you the number of times I've wished I could live that moment over. But God works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will. God can take a mistake that a prisoner makes - or the thoughtless decision that I made - and work good from it.

# **Supreme Court Rules on LWOP for Juveniles**

By A.R. Quinn

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Kuntrell Jackson was barely out of middle school when he and two other juveniles went to a video store to rob it. One of the other youngsters killed the store clerk with a gun. Though Kuntrell had stayed outside as a lookout, he was charged as an adult. He was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole (LWOP).

A recent Supreme Court decision has major implications for offenders like Kuntrell.

On June 25, 2012, the nation's highest court placed limits on the use of life sentences for offenders who commit murder before they turn 18. In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court justices ruled that judges must take into account the defendant's age and the details of the crime before



sentencing them to LWOP. Calling mandatory LWOP sentences for minors "cruel and unusual punishment" – a violation of the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution – the ruling strikes down laws in more than two dozen states that used to require life terms for murderers, regardless of their age.

The Court ruled in the cases of two 14-year-olds – includ-

ing Kuntrell – who received life sentences for their part in a homicide, but the decision has wider implications. It applies to all whose crimes were committed before they became adults. It does not, however, call for the immediate release of any inmate sentenced under the old state laws, and judges will still have the freedom to give life sentences to minors when

they feel such a punishment is warranted by the crime.

In spite of the limitations, the case is a noteworthy milestone for those who oppose lengthy sentences for youthful criminals.

Justice Elena Kagan, who was appointed to the Court in 2010 by President Barack Obama, spoke for the majority, saying, "We ... hold that mandatory life without parole for those under age of 18 at the time of their crime violates the 8th Amendment's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishments." Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, Anthony M. Kennedy, and Sonia Sotomayor agreed.

The opinion authored by Justice Kagan did not specify whether the ruling will only effect sentences in the future, or whether it might open the door to new hearings for more than 2,000 inmates who are

currently serving LWOP for homicides committed while they were minors.

This is the third decision in the last 10 years to change how juveniles are sentenced in the United States. In 2005, the Court outlawed capital punishment for juvenile offenders convicted of murder, and in 2010, it ruled that LWOP sentences for minors for anything less than homicide were unconstitutional.



**VOLUME 22, NO. 1** 

**WINTER 2013** 

# Confessions of a Regular Joe

by Ruth Chodniewicz

oe Bruton knows how to welcome prisoners back into society. He has walked that road himself – twice. But his two experiences could not have looked more different. The first led to total failure, and the second to a whole new life.

Joe grew up in Houston, Texas. He did well in high school, but there was always alcohol around his home, and he accepted it as normal. He began drinking early and added drugs to the routine while still a teenager.

That pattern continued when Joe enrolled in college. By his sophomore year he was a heavy drinker, cocaine user, and heroin addict. To support his habit, he grew and sold marijuana.

He tried to escape the Houston drug scene by transferring to the University of Arkansas. In 1987, Joe received his bachelor's degree and was accepted into graduate school. He met and married his wife a year later. But during his second year of study, the FBI caught up with Joe

for drug trafficking. He would spend the next 33 months in a federal prison while his wife struggled with the family finances – and with the birth of their first son.

### **Fleeting Success**

PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS

After prison, Joe paroled to a halfway house in Tulsa, Okla. He transferred his graduate school credits to Oklahoma State University and earned a master's degree in environmental engineering. After landing a good-paying job, he was able to move his wife and son to Oklahoma.

After several years of success – and two more children – Joe started an environmental consulting firm. Everything went well until an insurance company refused to pay for a major project. Trying to keep his thinly financed company afloat, Joe returned to drug trafficking to pay the bills. Next he went back to using drugs and alcohol to deal with his stress. He lost his home and business and was stuck with huge debt. The family car

Continued on page 2



noto by Michael Dra

# Until Prison Do Us Part? Maintaining a Marriage While Incarcerated

by John Byrne

othing is harder on a marriage tnan incarceration. Under the weight of distance, shame, financial hardship, and mutual misunderstanding, even unions that seemed strong can fall apart. Quoting California prison chaplain Ron Grant, a 2005 New York Times article estimates that "between a married man's arrest and the end of his first year in prison, 80 percent of marriages break up ... For female inmates, the divorce rate is closer to 100 percent."

Even if your marriage survives while you are in prison, you're not out of the woods after your release date. Your



When you do time, your loved ones do, too. The right perspective can help you hold a marriage together through the tough times.

spouse might have hung in there with you through your

arrest, trial, and prison time, and you might intend to keep the

relationship together when you get out. But even those relationships often fail eventually.

The reasons for the failures are complex.

Here is one scenario: A wife goes to prison. The husband stays on the outside, taking care of the home and family. The husband stays with his incarcerated wife because he feels it's the right thing to do. He gets a lot of pressure from family members not to make his wife feel abandoned or hurt. The husband genuinely cares about his incarcerated wife. He feels sorry for what she is going through. He can't imagine asking for a divorce while she's behind bars because he knows it would devastate her emotionally. After the wife comes home, though, the sympathy dries up. The real

problems in the marriage erupt again, causing separation or divorce.

Let's imagine another situation: A husband goes to prison, leaving his wife and a couple of kids. The wife struggles for a while, but eventually she creates a whole new life for herself. She works. She takes care of the family. The children are growing up, and she is the only authority in their lives. She calls and visits her incarcerated husband as often as she can afford it, but essentially she has learned to function without him. When the husband gets out of prison, he tries his best to be a good dad and disciplinarian, but it's like he's moved back into a house of strangers. His kids look at him as if to say, Where did you

Continued on page 2

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# **Don't Sit on Your Gifts**

## **Guest Column: Garland Hunt**

Recently I visited California State Prison at Solano for a yard event organized by Prison Fellowship. As I mingled with the inmates on the yard, one young man told me that he had been playing the drums for most of his life. He pointed out another inmate who was a great singer. It struck me so many inmates have such special gifts from God, but no way to use them to advance His kingdom. They are just sitting on their gifts!

It was arranged that the drummer and the singer - who could also play the keyboard - would come onstage and perform before I spoke. They were so excited! Performing in front of their peers was a huge thing for them. The young singer sang a song he had written while in prison. It was beautiful and inspiring.

In 2 Timothy 1:6, Paul urges a young pastor named Timothy to "stir up the gift of God which is in you." God has given great gifts to inmates. Some are entrepreneurs, writers, artists (see page 4!), singers, or preachers. As president of

Prison Fellowship, it's part of my calling and commitment to help you use your gifts even while you are still incarcerated, so whether you're going home in six months or you're facing a long sentence, your time is productive, your God-given abilities aren't gathering dust, and you're better prepared for the future. My prayer is that you will take full advantage of everything that's available to you to "stir up the gift of God," whether your facility has lots of programs and volunteers, or all you've got is the copy of Inside Journal in your hands. No matter what your unique situation is, God has given you gifts that you can use right now to benefit other people and give Him glory.

Have you received gifts from God that until now you have kept on the sidelines? Ask

God how He wants to use the talents you have received from Him. God gave you gifts for a purpose; don't sit on them any longer.

Garland Hunt President, Prison Fellowship

Haull R. Aut



1. Use your prison time to

the future:

**Until Prison Do** 

Continued from page 1

come from? His wife is happy

he's home, but she also has

years of resentment built up

from holding the house togeth-

er all by herself. Conflicts build

up that threaten to destroy the

If you're in prison and still

battle to fight, but you and your

married, you've got an uphill

family can succeed with a lot

of faith, love, and hard work.

maintain your marriage while

lay a firm foundation for

you serve your sentence - and

Here are some tips to help you

**Us Part?** 

reunited family.

grow from the inside out. If you are already trying to follow Christ, keep going! Study the Bible and learn what it says about His purpose for your life. You can be the greatest asset to your spouse and your family if you are in the processing of becoming a new man or a new woman. If you're not sure where you stand with God, it's never too late to start a relationship with Him (check out the article on page 3), and you can look inside yourself to ask some hard questions: How has your lifestyle and your incarceration hurt your spouse? Have you told them you are sorry? Are

you ready to change?

2. Let your spouse (and children) know they are your top priority. If you have a job, send money home to them for school clothes, food, or special presents. It doesn't matter whether it's a lot or a little. The important thing is that you are making a sacrifice for them. Don't ask them to make your life more comfortable. Write and call. Listen to your spouse and really hear what he or she is saying. Pray for your spouse and family every day.

3. If your spouse has an ongoing problem with drugs or alcohol, do NOT go directly home to live with that spouse if and when you are released.

I know this is difficult advice to read, but the very best thing you can do for your spouse and your family is to stay clean, keep away from overwhelming temptation, and let him or her see you living a new life. If you've struggled with addiction in the past, your recovery has to come first. It will be hard, but if you are Christian, you can know that in Christ all things are possible. Let things come together in God's time.

John Byrne is the director of the InnerChange Freedom Initiative in Lino Lakes, Minn.

## **Subscription Info**

At Inside Journal® (IJ), we receive many letters each week from inmates asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers - however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is only available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or inside\_journal@pfm.org.

### Confessions of a **Regular Joe** Continued from page 1

was repossessed. An eviction notice was hung on the door.

Drunk and needing a drug fix, Joe robbed a bank by bluffing that he had a gun. His take was just \$2,000. On his way out the door, he glanced directly into a security camera, and his fate was sealed.

"I was going through gut-wrenching withdrawal and facing 30 years in prison."

### Finding Jesus in the **Rubber Room**

Joe was quickly arrested and placed in a rubber room detox center at the county jail. "I was going through gut-wrenching withdrawal and facing 30 years in prison. I asked Jesus not into my life, but to take it - to kill me. I was pathetic. ... Little did I know that Jesus Christ had a different plan for me."

"Jesus touched my life on the floor of that detox tank, and I was born again," Joe recalls. "I knew that God was real."

Joe started listening to the prison ministers, and he began to read the Bible. He also started to pray for a way to grow in Christ while in prison. God answered with an intensive Prison Fellowship reentry program.

"[The program] gave me a place to grow in my knowledge of the Lord," Joe recalls. "The whole environment was geared towards spiritual growth and character development. I found out who I was - a man of God. I was forgiven. I learned how to take the steps to restore my life and my relationships."

### **Moving into Ministry**

Released from prison in October 2008, Joe began the reentry process. Through the church family he met while in the reentry program, Joe found employment at a chicken processing plant. He served at church by leading Bible studies and became an active volunteer for the reentry program and a local jail ministry.

Two years after his release, he was hired full-time by Goodwill Industries of Arkansas. At Goodwill, Joe now is building a reentry program for ex-prisoners modeled after his own experiences in the Prison Fellowship program. There, he has helped to double the capacity of Goodwill's reentry program. According to Joe, the nearly 60 men and women who have graduated from the program have enjoyed a 93-percent success



Through his work at Goodwill Industries, Joe is helping other ex-prisoners get a second chance at life on the outside.

rate over the last two years.

Joe is still a jail minister, and he is involved in numerous programs that assist prisoners and their families. For example, he leads Prison Fellowship's Angel

Tree program at his church. But he doesn't do any of it on his own strength. He spends hours every week in prayer, and he's on his tenth time reading through the Bible. "You get to

know someone by spending time with them," says Joe. "I continue to seek my Lord on a daily basis. I roll out of bed, hit my knees, and pray and start giving thanks." ■

# Life without Pain Is Agony

by Steve Rempe

recently published news article tells the story of Steven Pete. Steven and his brother were both born with a rare genetic disorder called congenital analgesia. While Steven has a sense of touch, he is unable to feel pain.

Right now you might be feeling envious of Steven. Who wouldn't want to enjoy a life free from hurt? Without pain, you wouldn't have to fear the consequences of your actions, and there'd be nothing to hold you back from achieving what you want in life ... right?

As Steven states in the article, a pain-free life is hardly ideal. Instead, Steven spends his days in fear that he might do serious harm to himself without noticing it. He tells the story of time he broke his leg at a roller-skating party, and didn't realize it until he saw people pointing at him and his blood-soaked pants where the broken bone had actually come out of the skin. Much of his childhood was spent at home or in hospitals recovering from injuries that he never felt.

Now, as an adult, Steven has to be very careful in choosing physical activities, and he lives in constant fear of internal injuries, like an appendicitis, which might not be diagnosed until it is too late. (His brother, sadly, took his own life, rather than have to deal with the growing list of complications resulting from his condition.)

## The Purpose of Pain

As much as we dislike physical pain, the truth is that it serves a very important function. Pain tells us that something is wrong – it tells us that what we're doing is dangerous, and that if we continue to do it, we'll cause ourselves even more hurt and grief. Pain is the body's built-in



warning system, and we ignore it at our peril.

Let's say you kick a stone wall. The laws of physics are pretty clear about what happens next. The wall is stronger than your foot, and you can expect to feel a lot of pain. The same thing happens when you break God's law (the term for breaking God's law is "sin.") When you break God's law, the consequences are equally predictable - you can expect a lot of pain in your life. The pain caused by our sin is God's way of giving us a warning, like a red flag that says, "Watch out! You are in danger!" God can even use our pain to direct us closer to Himself. When we feel discouraged or alone, our pain can encourage us to seek out God, who the Bible tells us is a "friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24).

Does this mean that God intended there to be pain in this world? The answer is "no." But God allows us to feel the painful consequences of our own sin so that we will know when we are wandering away from Him and to remind us that this broken world is

not our permanent home.

Even when we suffer for someone else's mistake, God can still use that pain in our lives to help us stay close to Him and get our strength from Him. And just as a good doctor can diagnose and fix something that is causing us physical pain, so God can reach down and heal us, preparing us to be used by Him.

It is important to remember that God did not protect His Son from pain. Jesus wept when His friend Lazarus died. He felt great sorrow for the people living in Jerusalem, saying that he wanted to "gather [God's] children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings," and lamenting that they had instead chosen to reject the message God had given them.

And while the physical suffering Jesus experienced on the cross far exceeds any pain most of us will ever experience, it was the separation from His Father that occurred when taking on our sins that caused Jesus the most agony. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He cried.

#### **A Pain-Free Future**

The good news is that pain doesn't have to have the final word. When we feel disgraced, frustrated, alone, or hurt, we can always turn to God, who offers us a peace that money can't buy, a peace that's bigger than our circumstances. And while we will never be able to escape pain

entirely in this world, we can rest easy, knowing that God is using our troubles to mold us into the men and women He wants us to be, and that He promises us a coming life where such pain is a distant memory.

"I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them," says Revelation 21:3-4. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."

Do you need God's help to deal with the pain you are facing? Do you want to accept His invitation to a future where – thanks to the death of His Son Jesus Christ to pay for your sins – "He will wipe every tear" from your eyes? Read "No Pain, No Gain." ■

# No Pain, No Gain

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains," says Christian writer C. S. Lewis. "It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

Some pain we bring upon ourselves with our own actions, and some pain is caused by events outside our control. But all pain is a result of our separation from God. The good news: God offers us forgiveness and healing for all of it. Because of the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus, we have the chance to be restored, adopted children of God.

If you desire God's free gift of salvation, you might pray something like this:

God, I don't want to be separated from You anymore. Thank You for Jesus, and His paying the price for my sins on the cross. I give You control of my life. Please help me to live a life that brings You joy, and one that shows Your love to everyone around me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

If you have prayed a prayer like this, or if you want to know more about Jesus and what He did on your behalf, *Inside Journal* will help you enroll in a free correspondence Bible study – and get a Bible, if you don't have access to one through your chaplain or chapel program – when you write to "No Pain, No Gain," c/o *Inside Journal*, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790.

# California Votes to Reform "Three Strikes"

by A.R. Quinn

n November 6, 2012, citizens of California overwhelmingly voted to approve Proposition 36, a ballot measure reforming the state's Three Strikes law. Sixtynine percent of the voting public were in favor of the proposition, while only 31 percent opposed it.

Under the old version of California's Three Strikes law, a life sentence could be handed down after an offender was convicted of his or her third felony – even if the third offense was something as minor as shoplifting. Under the revised law, an offender who has two or more serious or violent felony convictions, and whose third conviction is for a less serious,

nonviolent crime, would receive twice the normal recommended sentence, instead of 25-years-to-life, as was required under the old law. There are some exceptions; if the third striker's new or previous convictions involve certain drug-, sex-, or gun-related crimes, a 25-years-to-life sentence may still apply.

The new law also gives nearly 3,000 inmates now serving life terms under the Three Strikes law a means to ask for a reduced sentence.

California's Three Strikes law was originally passed in 1994, after a young woman was killed in a 1992 purse snatching by two repeat offenders. It was intended to keep the most dangerous criminals behind bars and improve public safety, but many consid-

ered it to be one of the harshest sentencing laws in the country, and it was partially to blame for the rapid growth of California's prison population in the years that followed.

Advocates for Prop 36 say that the sentencing changes will save the state between \$70 to \$90 million a year, money that can be used to fund schools and decrease the burden on taxpayers.

Mike Reynolds, who wrote the original Three Strikes law after his daughter, Kimber, died in the purse snatching, warned that the changes will put the safety of communities at risk. "It's a big day for criminals and their attorneys," he said to the San Francisco Chronicle.

But criminal justice reform advocates had a more positive take.

"[The] vote on Proposition 36 sends a powerful message to policymakers in California and across the country that taxpayers are ready for a new direction in criminal justice," Adam Gelb, director of the Pew Center on the States' Public Safety Performance Project, told the San Jose Mercury News. "States that have already made some changes to their sentencing laws may be inspired to take a second look, and states that haven't made significant changes yet may start."

This is the second time that California voters have revised their state's Three Strikes law. In 2000, they passed a measure that sent some nonviolent drug offenders to drug treatment instead of prison.

Also on November 6, a majority

of Golden State voters said "no" to Proposition 34. If Prop 34 had passed, it would have outlawed the death penalty in California.



notos.com

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# **Comics Tell Inmate Stories**







BUT THEN GOD SHOWS ME A PROMISE FROM THE BIBLE. IT GIVES ME THE COURAGE TO TRUST THAT HE'LL KEEP US SAFE....

"WHEN A MAN'S WAYS AKE PLEASING TO THE LORD, HE MAKES EVEN HIS ENEMIES TO LIVE AT PEACE WITH HIM."

TODAY I'M A MAN OF PEACE
BECAUSE OF JESUS CHRIST.
IS HARE HIS GOOD NEWS IN
PRISONS ACROSS THE USA.

THE BIBLE SAYS,
YOU THAT HE DID FOR ME...

"YOU THAT HE DID FOR ME...

"YOU THAT HE DID FOR ME...

"YET TO ALL WHO RECEIVE HIM,
TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIS
NAME, HE GAVE THE RIGHT TO
BECOME CHILDREN OF GOOD,"
JOHN 1:10

ARE YOU CAN
HAVE TRUE
FREEOM

O REALIZE YOU NEED A SAVIOR! THE
BIBLE SAYS ALL HAVE SINNED AND
HELL.... BUT GOD DOESN'T WANT THAT.

CONFESS YOUR SINS TO GOO.... AND THEN STOP SINNING.

CHOOSE TO BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST, GOO'S SON, DIED
PEAN THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD AND WAS RAISED FROM THE
DEAD THREE DAYS LATER.

PRAY SOMETHING LIKE THIS; "UESUS, I CONFESS THAT I'M A
SINNER, I'VE IUVED SELFISH.Y, I HAVEN'T LOVED OTTARE PRODUE OR
YOU THE WAY I SHOULD HAVE BUT IT BELIEVE THAT YOU DIED FOR
THE FORGIVENESS OF MY SINS. COME INTO MY HEART AND MAKE
ME CLEAN, HELP ME TO LIVE THE WAY YOU INTENDED, CHANSE ME
AND MAKE ME PART OF THE FAMILY OF GOO. AMEN."

NOW PEAD YOUR BIBLE WHENEVER YOU CAN. THE BIBLE ISN'T
SOME DUSTY OLD BOOK FOR YOUR GRANDMOTHER.... THE BIBLE IS
GOOT BULKING TO YOU PERSON THE PROPORTANT.

HE BIBLE SAYS,
YOU THAT HE DID FOR
THE FORGIVENESS OF MY SINS. COME INTO MY HEART AND MAKE
ME CLEAN, HELP ME TO LIVE THE WAY YOU INTENDED, CHANSE ME
AND MAKE ME PART OF THE FAMILY OF GOO. AMEN."

NOW PEAD YOUR BIBLE WHENEVER YOU CAN. THE BIBLE ISN'T
SOME DUSTY OLD BOOK FOR YOUR GRANDMOTHER.... THE BIBLE IS
GOOT BULKING TO YOU PERSON MALLY, AND FINALLY, IT'S MIPPORTANT.

OW PEAD YOUR BIBLE WHENEVER YOU CAN, THE BIBLE ISN'T OME DUSTY DUD BOOK FOR YOUR GRANDMOTHER... THE BIBLE IS OD TALKING TO YOU PERSONALLY, AND FINALLY, IT'S IMPORTANT D TELL SOMEONE ELSE ABOUT YOUR DECISION TO FOLLOW ESUS CHRIST.

If you prayed this prayer and would like help getting started in your walk with Jesus Christ, please write to Bill Corum /o Gospel Tract Society Inc, PO Box 1118, Independence, MO 64051

COMIX35 is looking for a select number of highly talented inmate cartoonists to help produce testimony comic strips like this one. Read the submission guidelines to learn how a chaplain or prison minsitry volunteer can help you apply.

A O&A with Nate Butler

or this edition of Inside Journal, Managing Editor A.R. Quinn sat down to talk with Nate Butler, president, CEO, and cofounder of COMIX35, a unique Christian comics ministry. Before founding COMIX35, Nate spent two decades as a cartoonist, commercial artist, and writer/illustrator. He worked for clients such as Jim Henson Productions, Weekly Reader, Children's Television Network, DC Comics, and Kings Features Syndicate, and he has done comic scriptwriting for Modern Publishing, Archie Comics, and Marvel Comics. Through the years, he has worked on many internationally known characters such as Archie & Jughead, The Muppets, Popeye, Barbie, Heathcliff, Bugs Bunny, Tiny Toons, Mighty Mouse, Rocky & Bullwinkle, Snuffy Smith, Animated Batman, The Jetsons, Berenstain Bears, Tom & Jerry, and more.

# IJ: What's behind the name of your organization, COMIX35?

Nate: COMIX35 comes from Exodus 35:30-35, where God gifts certain artisans who are creating the works of art for the tabernacle. He doesn't just give them the calling, but He also inspires them to teach these artistic abilities to others.

# IJ: Why have a Christian comics ministry?

Nate: Comics are really accessible to people all over the world. Our whole thing is about helping people within their unique cultures produce their own comics for people in their

own contexts and languages, so they can understand the Gospel.

# IJ: How did you get started in comics and cartooning?

Nate: When I was four years old I saw Dick Tracy in the paper ... I told my mother, "That's what I'm gonna be - the guy who draws Dick Tracy." I started drawing, and I never made any other plans for my life. My mother was an amateur artist and supportive. My dad was a little skeptical. He wanted me to have security, but God opened all the doors. I worked for a while in the newspaper business and then went into freelancing commercial art ... I looked back at some point and realized God had put me through this life-long training program to know everything about producing and printing comics. My vision was small to produce Christian comics.

IJ: Eventually you started hosting seminars so people from all over the world could learn how to produce Christian comics to explain the Gospel to people in their home cultures. How did you start to apply your ministry to prison inmates?

Nate: I was married for 30 years to my first wife, Susan. Before she died from ovarian cancer, she and I went up to Colorado for vacation. We stayed at this charming bed and breakfast. We had to drive down the mountain into the town to get groceries or go to a restaurant ... We were driving down the hill and I looked to my right, and there was a prison. I felt like the Lord was saying, "Look at that." We went down the hill and came back

up. I looked to my left, and there was the prison. Every time I went down the hill I felt the prompting to look at that prison. I asked God, "Why are you telling me this?" I didn't hear anything.

But eventually I realized that prison is a culture - it has a language all its own. Maybe I am supposed to help do that in prisons. Eventually we had one of our cartooning seminars at the Radgowski Correctional Institution. I learned in the process that there's lots of institutional concerns. Inmates in prison have very limited supplies. There are problems with printing in colored ink ... And of course no staples. We came up with these black-and-white folding tracts on enameled paper. When we first started, my idea was inmates doing their own stories. The first tract we did we did professionally just as an example to show them. The person that ended up doing [exprisoner and worship leader] Bobby McGee's tract does not want to do his own story, but he is an excellent artist and storyteller. He is working on another one now for [ex-prisoner and prison minister] Manny Mill.

### IJ: Do you think these comics telling the real-life stories of inmates and former inmates will be well-received?

Nate: A while ago I went down to [the Louisiana State Penitentiary at] Angola. I wasn't sure what I could bring in, so I didn't bring any of our comics. We were walking around visiting cells, and I offered a New Testament to this one young guy. He pushed it right back. He said, "Do you know how many of those have been offered to me?" But we kept talking, and I soon as I told him I worked

# ATTENTION ENMATES & CHAPLAINES

# CHRISTIAN COMICS TRACTS for PRISON INVIATES

This mini-comic was written and designed by a prison inmate! Would YOU like to create a similar 7-page comic about a prison ministry worker — or about your own personal testimony? If you are a talented Christian inmate, here is an opportunity for you to create a mini-comic to reach your fellow inmates and at-risk youth!

Ask your chaplain to recommend you and submit examples of your drawing and storytelling abilities. (Other prison ministry workers or family members may also help identify Christian inmates who are good artists and storytellers, but inmate submissions accompanied by a recommendation letter from a chaplain will receive first consideration.)

Christian comics professionals will review your submitted samples and your recommendation. If your work is chosen, volunteer consultants may assist you in producing or refining your own 7-page mini-comic in a format like this one, either in person or via correspondence.

You will draw your finished comic pages in pencil, and Christian comics professionals will do the finished inking and lettering to prepare the comic for reproduction.

You will receive at least 1 copy of the printed comic and also a Christian Comics Collection containing 1 copy each of 12 different Christian comic books and graphic novels (if your prison rules permit it). Upon request, your chaplain may receive up to 2000 copies of your printed mini-comic for distribution within your prison or the local community.

E-mail  $prison\_contact@comix35.org$  for more details or see this web page: www.comix35.org/prison.html

Produced by COMIX35 (an Operation Starting Line Collaborating Ministry)
PO Box 94706 • Albuquerque, NM 87199-4706 USA • www.comix35.org/prison.html
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on comics his eyes just lit up ... Comics are just something everyone can relate to.

Are you an aspiring cartoonist? Read the submission guidelines carefully to learn how your work can be considered by the professionals at COMIX35.

Important: Do NOT send submissions to *Inside Journal*. Send submissions to COMIX35 in New Mexico via your chaplain, program coordinator, or ministry volunteer.



INSIDE JOURNAL® is published 4 times a year by Prison Fellowship Ministries, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790, www.prisonfellowship.org ⋅ (703)478-0100

Managing Editor, A.R. Quinn; Writers, John Byrne, Ruth Chodniewicz, A.R. Quinn, Steve Rempe; Graphic Designer, Sheri Powell

A member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, and the American Correctional Association.

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Great Exchange, p.3



Angel Tree,

**SPRING 2013** 

# INSIDE OUTNAL

# From Heist to Healing

by A.R. Quinn

effery Hopper has a picture of himself and his daughter, Amanda, sitting on the couch when she was just a little girl.

"She adored me. I was her world," Jeffery remembers. "I destroyed it by going to prison."

# "We'll all go down together"

Jeffery grew up in Port Neches, Texas, where he adopted a criminal lifestyle early on.

"I had no Christian upbringing whatsoever," he recalls. "Bibles were not allowed in my house." Instead, his father taught him to have a survival-of-the-fittest mentality, taking whatever he wanted.

"If I wanted a bicycle or a car," he says, "I had to buy it or steal it. I stole it."

Despite spending a week in jail at age 14, Jeffery mostly avoided the consequences of his actions, until he graduated

to drug trafficking. A few years after his daughter was born, he got in over his head, and his entire family relocated to Las Vegas, Nev., to protect his life.

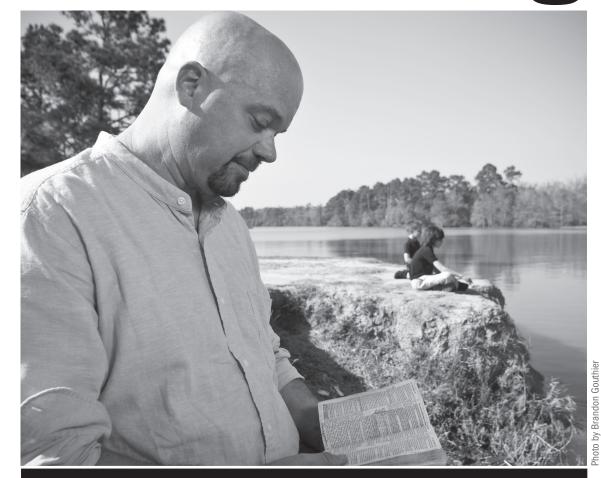
PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS

Jeffery had gotten divorced from Amanda's mother, and he didn't see his daughter as often as he wanted. Amanda was the only good thing in his life. He fantasized about making enough money to take her somewhere they could live in peace, but his dream of a big score backfired.

Jeffery, his father, and one of his brothers stole \$1.1 million from the Stardust Casino in a heist that made headlines in April 1992. But they were soon caught, and authorities threatened to charge the entire Hopper family – including Jeffery's uninvolved mother and sisters – with crimes.

"My dad said, 'Fine, we'll all go down together," Jeffery remembers, but he knew he couldn't let that happen. "I realized that what we do hurts other people – my daughter, my

Continued on page 2



Jeffery entered prison a bitter, broken young man, but behind bars he found new purpose for his life, and he's a great role model to his two sons (seen here in the background).

# Becoming a Better Dad

A Q&A with Gregory Slayton

regory W.
Slayton is a successful businessman, best-selling author, former

ambassador to Bermuda, and (most importantly in his eyes) the father of four children. While living on five continents, he took notes about what excellent fathers had in common. His journal became the basis for Be a Better Dad Today: 10 Tools Every Father Needs, a book published in 2012 by Regal Publishers. Inside Journal sat down with him to ask how incarcerated fathers can still contribute to their children's well-being.

IJ: What was your family experience like growing up?

Gregory: I didn't have a real father when I was growing up. He was in and out of our lives. Finally he was completely out of our lives. It was painful and difficult. We always had food and a home, and I went to college. There were lots of blessings, but my childhood was really not a happy one.

IJ: So how did you learn how to be a good dad?

Gregory: I became a Christian in college. I really wanted to get married, but I didn't have an idea of how to be a good father. I thought I would just try to do the opposite of my own father. But I realized that wasn't going to work. I needed positive role models and good examples. So I kept a journal about fatherhood for myself as I traveled the world and lived on five different continents. I watched good dads around the world and how they operated. For example I remember a really good dad in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He made time to spend with his teenagers all the time. It was a big Catholic family. The dad made sure to take the teenagers out to lunch or dinner even though he was a very busy executive. ... When you stripped away the cultural context, there were a lot of similarities across the continents. This journal was just for myself and trying to learn to be a good dad myself. But then some of my friends encouraged me to turn it into a book about fatherhood. By God's grace, Regal Publishers published it last spring and it has now sold over 65,000 copies. My wife and I decided at the very beginning that we would give all our royalties to Christian fatherhood and family charities, so we hope the book has been a double blessing in that way.

IJ: Just how important are dads?

Gregory: For men who have

children, there is no more important job than being a father. Fathers are critical to the futures of their sons and daughters. Statistics bear this out. One of the primary drivers of a young person's success or failure in life is the input they get from their mom and dad. We all know - those of us who didn't have real dads growing up - we all know painful it is to not have a father you can depend on. We all make mistakes, but to at least have someone who cares about you - even flawed - is far better than having nobody! The challenge for our generation is - are we going to abandon our children, or are we going to have to a better relationship with them than we had with our fathers.

IJ: Can men be great dads even if their own fathers were less than ideal?

Gregory: That's a great ques-



Gregory Slayton

tion - what enables us to change the tide of history and be a good father when we didn't have good fathers growing up? The most important thing for me was recognizing that I had a Heavenly Father. My earthly father had abandoned me, but it didn't matter because my Heavenly Father loved me. It took me a long time to understand that deep in my heart. That's a critical reality. The second principle is understanding how deeply our children need us. They may not say or show that, but that doesn't mean it isn't true. Even our teenagers need us, even if they can't express it. They want us to be involved in their lives.

Continued on page 2

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# **Your Letters**

"I spent 48 days in the SHU between Terre Haute and Elkton waiting for transportation and bed space. Spending Thanksgiving and Christmas in these places was no picnic but God was with me always! I wrote to my family encouraging them not to exchange gifts at Christmas but rather spend that money at Prison Fellowship for the great ministry you have. It also helped that I was able to listen to Christian radio in Pittsburgh where I heard the fundraiser for Prison Fellowship on WORD FM 101.5. I was told that my family did honor my request."

- B.E., Ohio

"We were very blessed to have [a church] volunteer to gift my children. My kids and I were amazed by both the afternoon social events as well as the quality and quantity of gifts. Each of my four children was given a sweatshirt of the university of their choice. Three beavers (OSU) and 1 duck (U of O). The lone duck, my 13-year-

old daughter ... has struggled a lot in my time gone and this gift has taken on special significance for her. Last week at the Washington County Fair, where my daughter was showing a pig, my younger sister noticed that she was wearing the same U of O sweatshirt every day. On most afternoons it was nearly 80 degrees. So my sister asked her if she wanted to wear a Tshirt or a tanktop. My daughter politely replied, 'No thank you, I wear this sweatshirt every day because my Daddy got it for me and I miss him!' I could not hold back the tears when my sister told me this and now I



write this letter to pass on the happiness and joy your program has brought to my family and me."

- D.E., Oregon

## **Subscription Info**

At *Inside Journal®* (IJ), we receive many letters each week from inmates asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers – however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, *IJ* is *only* available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org. (The previous issue incorrectly listed the email address as inside\_journal@pfm.org.)

# Becoming a Better Dad Continued from page 1

IJ: What about dads who are far away – what can they

Gregory: Long-distance dads are a rapidly growing category, whether it's because of incarceration, military service, or business travel. I myself was a long-distance dad for over a year. For the first year my family was in New York, I was living in Latin America. That was a 12-hour flight. My number one tip is this: Make sure your children know that you love them. Get on the phone. Write them a letter every week.

IJ: If a dad has burned his bridges with his children, how can he start again?

Gregory: Reconciliation is a slow process. Maybe you're fortunate and maybe the first time you call home, your kids want to see you. But if you've caused pain in your kids' lives, the path to restoration is usually slow. For most dads in that situation, I recommend starting with a heartfelt letter. In almost all

circumstances we have to ask for forgiveness. If we've hurt another person – and if we ourselves have been hurt – we have to learn to forgive and ask for forgiveness. That's an important part of the healing process. Another tip is to start a fatherhood group with other dads at your prison, so you can talk about challenges you have in common and how to share them. That's the "secret sauce."

# IJ: How can our readers get a copy of your book?

Gregory: Last year our little foundation was deeply honored to partner with Prison Fellowship in providing fatherhood resources like the book to prison chaplains across the nation. When these resources were shared with prisoners, they formed what we called "fatherhood fellowships" so that men could get together and help each other - with God's help become better dads. We don't send copies of the book directly to inmates. But if you are interested, ask your chaplain if he [or she] has a copy, or if not, he [or she] can order one for the prison library. Chaplains can go to beabetterdadtoday.com. ■

## From Heist to Healing Continued from page 1

family... I pled guilty and agreed to testify."

Jeffery entered prison. In part, he was relieved to stop looking over his shoulder – to stop dodging death.

"I kept a list of people I was going to get even with – snitches, liars, people who betrayed me. [I wrote down] what they had done and the punishment I thought they deserved."

"When I look back on it, I was rescued when I was arrested," he muses.

But it didn't feel like rescue to five-year-old Amanda. When her daddy went to prison, she was devastated.

## A Victory for Love

Jeffery's testimony spared his mother and sisters, but his decision didn't yet reflect a change in his heart. He was still "angry at the world."

"I kept a list of people I was

going to get even with – snitches, liars, people who betrayed me. [I wrote down] what they had done and the punishment I thought they deserved," he says.

At the Seagoville, Texas, prison where Jeffery was incarcerated, temperatures rose unbearably high in the summer. The only room with air conditioning was the prison chapel.

Jeffery and other inmates used to sit in the back of the chapel. Many slept through the service. Jeffery thought the religious volunteers were a "joke." He tuned out their words about God – until the chaplain talked about Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program. Jeffery thought about Amanda, and how nice it would be for her to receive a Christmas gift that said he still loved her. He signed her up.

In December, Jeffery received a note from Amanda, her childish letters written in pencil. She thanked him for the gifts and told him that she loved him.

When he opened her note after mail call, Jeffery fought tears. "Where I was, in prison, you don't cry. It says you're weak and a victim ... The only way God got to me was through my daughter – the only weak spot I had," he says.

God had broken through Jeffery's defenses of hatred.

On Christmas Eve, Jeffery's sister brought Amanda to visit him. The little girl gushed about the Angel Tree volunteers who had brought gifts to her home, and who had told her about the love and forgiveness of God. Amanda said that she loved and forgave her dad.

"I went to the chapel after that," remembers Jeffery, "and fell apart."

### "God told me to"

Jeffery studied his Bible behind bars, but he struggled to follow God after release. He wasn't breaking the law and he still read Scripture, but he didn't understand how it applied to his life, and he didn't know how to find a church to help him grow.

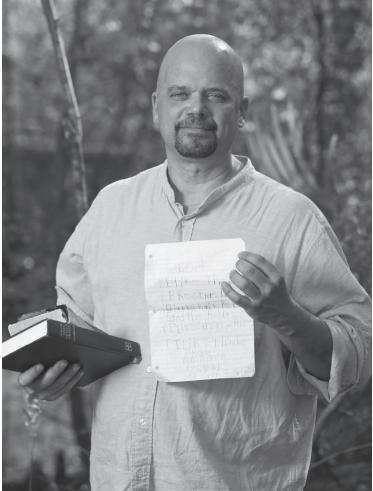
Things changed when Jeffery was mangled by a five-ton machine at work in 1999. While he was in the hospital, a Christian co-worker and his pastor came to visit him.

"Why do you care? Why do you visit me? I'm not giving anything [to your church]," Jeffery said.

"God told me to," the pastor answered.

The pastor's answer rekindled Jeffery's faith. He realized that God could speak to him and guide his steps, too - as long as Jeffery was listening. Wanting to grow more, Jeffery enrolled in seminary and studied to become a hospice chaplain. From 2010 to 2012, he comforted the dying with the forgiveness and peace of God. When he lost his hospice job, he went back to construction work with a smile on his face. He knew God had a plan for him, and he could serve Him wherever he was working.

Even while following God, life hasn't been easy for Jeffery. When his second wife, the mother of his two sons, left because she "didn't want to be a pastor's wife," Jeffery cried out. He didn't understand why God would allow him to suffer for obedience. But over time, Jeffery came to realize that God



After she received a Christmas gift through Angel Tree, Jeffery received a handwritten letter of thanks from his daughter. He broke down crying when he opened it.

was teaching him about forgiveness. He could no longer keep a list of "enemies." He had to forgive and move on.

Now Jeffery, a single dad, uses old scars to minister to others in pain.

He takes great joy in his role as a father to his two boys, and to grown-up Amanda, who followed in his footsteps.

"She started going to church, began to study, and will now challenge me on what my interpretation of Scripture is," Jeffery laughs. Now the married mother of a baby girl, she even ministers to the women in a local jail.

Jeffery still has a list, but a different kind. This year Jeffery has worked his way through a call list of local churches, recruiting them for the Angel Tree Christmas program. He has a compelling testimony to persuade them.

"I know what it does," he says.
"I know how far it goes." ■

Photo by Brandon

2

# The Great Exchange

## by Johnathan Kana

vividly remember standing before the district judge at my final court hearing. Several months before, I had agreed to a plea bargain with the prosecution, and now my holiday was up. Today I would finally enter my guilty plea and surrender myself into the State's custody.

It is a scene that is permanently impressed upon my memory.

I had already hugged my loved ones for the last time before entering the courtroom that morning. I knew quite well that I would be leaving in handcuffs, and there would not be another opportunity to say my goodbyes. My dad and fiancée would sit with me until the clerk called my name, but after that I would be on my own before the judge. Where I was going, they could not follow.

Pleading guilty to a crime is a scary thing. I recall that, when my turn finally came, the judge twice asked me whether I wished to persist in my plea, explaining that I was giving up my "valuable rights" to a fair trial and other due process. I suddenly felt very small and weak. Here I was, standing before the man who held my future in his hands, confessing under oath that I had indeed committed the crime the prosecuting attorneys were accusing me of. Somewhere in the back of my mind I realized that this man had complete say over my fate. He might probate my sentence or put me away for a very long time.

## **Facing Conviction**

Then came the dreadful moment.

"In view of the evidence before the court," the judge recited, "I hereby find you guilty as charged."

The judge said more after that, but all I remember during those next few moments is feeling

overwhelmed by that word "guilty." Intellectually, I had come to court ready to accept responsibility for my crime. Emotionally, not so much. When the judge spoke, I went from "accused" to "convicted." And conviction meant that penal consequences would soon follow.

record that I, Johnathan Kana, had been there in the flesh that day. They wanted proof that the same individual who had actually committed the offense was also the person who had stood accused and convicted before the judge's bench and who had entered custody that day to bear the punish-

At some point I was ushered over to a side table where I had to finally "sign for my time." Even in my emotional distress, I thought it was odd that the State required this of me. Before the bailiff slapped the handcuffs on me, they wanted me to declare - in writing - that I understood the judge's verdict and agreed to submit to my punishment. It was the first document I ever signed that required me to verify my identity by placing my thumbprint beside the signature. The State wanted no mistakes: my thumbprint would create a permanent

ment due for his crime.

No confusion. No substitutes. Just cold, hard justice.

## A New Verdict

Several days later, while I was waiting in the county jail to be transferred to the state prison system, I overheard a conversation that changed my perspective on that day in court. Two guys who had been picked up on petty drug charges were arguing about who should "take the case" for the drugs. There was apparently some confusion about who the drugs actually belonged to, and the guy

who was actually guilty wanted his companion to take the fall in his place. The idea was that, since his homeboy had the shorter "rap sheet," he had less to lose.

I re-imagined that scene in the courtroom, standing before my judge as I prepared to enter my guilty plea. In my daydream, I was not alone; I had an advocate standing beside me. When the judge turned to me and asked for my plea, my advocate stepped forward.

"Guilty, Your Honor."

I watched as the judge shifted his attention from me to the one who had just spoken in my place. Instead of ordering him to step back and keep quiet, the judge reminded my advocate that he

was waiving his valuable rights to a fair trial and due process. My advocate refused to budge.

"Guilty, Your Honor."

After the gavel fell, they ushered this man who had spoken for me to the side table, where they required him to sign for my time. The paperwork said my name, but the signature and thumbprint were his: Jesus Christ.

As the bailiff led my Savior away, he turned toward me and smiled. I looked back to the Judge, who was also smiling, His face stained by tears.

"Not guilty," He said. "Not anymore." ■

Johnathan Kana is an ex-prisoner and freelance writer. He lives with his wife in central Texas.

# **Accept No Substitutes**

God is just. When you abuse His good gifts – your mind, body, and abilities – for your own selfish and wrong ends, the consequences are clear: you will be separated from God for all time.

But God loves you so much that He came up with a plan to spare you from the punishment you deserved – He paid the penalty Himself, dying on the cross. He took the fall for you. Now He is ready to declare you innocent and free. In exchange, He is asking for your heart and your life, so He can give you a future on earth filled with peace, joy, and purpose, and life with Him in heaven forever.

The Bible is clear: if you want to get right with God, there is no substitute for a relationship with Jesus. To get started, you might say a simple prayer like this. The words can be your own – just make sure it's sincere.

God, I accept Your great substitution. Thank You for sending Jesus to take the fall for me. I want You in my life – as my Rescuer, my loving Father, my Friend, and the Lord of my life. Please guide me as I walk in the path You have for me.

It's a good idea to join a Bible study and talk to a chaplain to help you continue in the decision to follow Jesus. *Inside Journal* wants to help you, too. Write to "No Substitutes," **P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790**, and we'll help you sign up for a free correspondence Bible study and get access to a Bible, if you don't have one.

# **New Pope Washes Prisoners' Feet**

by A.R. Quinn

ome, Italy – Pope Francis, the first pope to come from Latin America, spent Holy Thursday at Casal del Marmo, a

juvenile detention center on the outskirts of the Italian capital. There he washed and kissed the feet of 12 young prisoners, including two women. The Holy Thursday foot-washing ritual is traditionally done by popes to imitate Christ, who washed the feet of His disciples during the last meal He shared with them before being crucified.

"This is a symbol, it is a sign.

Washing your feet means I am at your service," Francis told the group, aged 14 to 21.

"Help one another. This is what Jesus teaches us," the pope said. "This is what I do. And I do it with my heart. I do this with my heart because it is my duty. As a priest and bishop, I must be at your service."

In a video released by the Vatican, the 76-year-old Argentinian was shown kneeling on the stone floor as he poured water from a silver cup over the feet of a dozen youths: black, white, male, female, even feet with tattoos. Then, after drying each foot with a cotton towel, he bent over and kissed it.

Previous popes carried out the

Holy Thursday rite in Rome's grand St. John Lateran Basilica, choosing 12 priests to represent the 12 apostles whose feet Christ washed during the Last Supper before His crucifixion.

Before he became pope, as archbishop of Buenos Aires, the former Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio celebrated the ritual foot-washing in jails, hospitals, or hospices – part of his service to the impoverished and outcast. He often washed the feet of girls and women.

That Francis would include women in his first Holy Thursday Mass as pope was remarkable, however, because current church rules exclude women. By washing the feet of female prisoners, Francis has provoked some controversy.



On this Holy Thursday, however, Francis was more concerned about hope than about controversy or church tradition. He had a simple message for the young inmates, whom he greeted one-by-one after the Mass, giving each an Easter egg.

"Don't lose hope," Francis said.
"Understand? With hope you can always go on."

One young man then asked why he had come to visit them.

Francis responded that it was to "help me to be humble, as a bishop should be."

The gesture, he said, came "from my heart. Things from the heart don't have an explanation." ■ (SOURCE: Huffington Post)

# **Prisoners Raise Funds for Kids**

LOY, ARIZ.—Every year, hundreds of thousands of inmates who otherwise couldn't provide Christmas gifts for their children do so through Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program. In 2012 some Arizona prisoners decided to give back - in the amount of \$3,300.

La Palma Correctional Center, a prison privately operated by the Corrections Corporation of America, houses 3,100 men in several compounds. In 2011, says Chaplain James Brunk, one in six inmates signed their children up for Angel Tree, so the men have come to know and value how the program enables them to connect with their families. When Compound 2 held a fundraising food sale - offering items like slices from Pizza Hut and hamburgers from MacDonald's for sale to prisoners - an inmate advisory council selected Angel Tree as the charity to receive the proceeds.

According to Chaplain Brunk, Angel Tree has been an important part of inmate life at La Palma since shortly after the facility opened in July 2008.

There, designated elders and deacons of the inmate church play a vital role in advertising and administering the program.

"The second year that we had Angel Tree," explains Chaplain Brunk, "I turned around to [the inmate church leaders] and said, 'Here is a wonderful opportunity for you to bless the inmates around you ... You should be letting guys know this is here to be a blessing." The inmates themselves got really excited about it."

The inmate church at La Palma has the same goals for itself as many churches on the outside - to preach the Gospel and to care for the poor and outcast. But because of the many restrictions that come with incarceration, it can be hard for the inmate church at La Palma to fulfill what it believes to be its calling.

the only thing that we have that enables the inmate church to actually be able, as an extension of the Church at large, to give, just to give. It is one of the pure examples here of the grace of God that is just giving and not expecting anything in return. That makes a huge difference, because that's what the church

"[Angel Tree is] just about



Prisoners at La Palma pooled their resources - and their appetites - to raise funds for a program that has benefited many of their children directly.

is all about," says Chaplain

Chaplain Brunk believes that Compound 2's donation to Angel Tree is a sign that the inmate church is being heard across the prison. The proceeds from food sales usually go to local charities, he says. This time, however, at the suggestion of the inmate deacons and elders, the nonreligious inmate advisory council made the unusual decision to give the funds to a national, Christian ministry.

"Angel Tree is making an

impact," says Chaplain Brunk. "There are Muslims and Wiccans on that council. For them to have taken the advice of the deacons and the elders and gone for it speaks volumes about what [Angel Tree is] doing." ■

# Sign Your Children Up for Angel Tree!

# What is Angel Tree?

Maybe you've heard of Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program, but you're not sure how it works. Angel Tree is a simple way to let your children know that you are thinking about them at Christmas.

Angel Tree works like this: You fill out an application asking Angel Tree to give your child a gift from you at Christmas (you can suggest what kind of gift you think your child would like). During the summer, your chaplain collects all the applications and sends them to Angel Tree. In the fall, Angel Tree volunteers call the person who takes care of your child to verify what gift your child would like to receive. Before Christmas, Angel Tree volunteers will buy and wrap the gift. The gift will be delivered to your child's home or given to your child at an Angel Tree Christmas party along with a presentation of the Gospel. Your child will be told that the gift is from you - their mom or dad who loves them! Plus, your brief, personal message to your child will be written on the gift tag.

## Give Your Child a Gift

It might still be summer, but now is the time to sign your children up to receive a Christmas present from you through Angel Tree. Applications must be postmarked by September 3, 2013. You must ask your chaplain or program coordinator for an application, and either the chaplain or program coordinator must submit it for you when you are done.



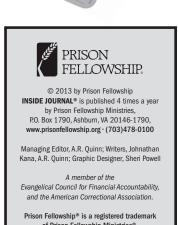
A Program of Prison Fellowship®

There are some important restrictions to the Angel Tree program, so please read carefully before filling out an application:

- 1) You **must** be the child(ren)'s father, mother, stepfather, or stepmother.
- 2) There **must not be a court order** restricting your contact with the child(ren) or their caregiver(s).
- Your child(ren) must live in the United States.
- 4) Your child(ren) must be 18 years old or younger.
- 5) The form must be filled out completely and legibly.
- 6) The form must be signed.
- 7) The form must be postmarked by September 3, 2013.

Get an application and sign your kids up today! A special gift from you at Christmas will help them know that you love them, and it will connect them with a church that can come alongside your family in your absence. Best of all, it will give them an opportunity to experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

Angel Tree makes great efforts to serve every eligible child. Sometimes, however, if we are unable to locate your children's caregiver, if the caregiver refuses to participate, or if there are not enough Angel Tree volunteers in a local area, we may not be able to deliver gifts to your children.







VOLUMEN 1, NO. 1

**EL PERIÓDICO DE PRISON FELLOWSHIP** 

**PRIMAVERA 2013** 

# Persiguiendo a Tony

Por A.R. Quinn

uedes obtener un arma?" preguntó Tony Chantaca, a la edad

de 16 años. El y dos amigos habían gastado el dinero que tenían para drogas. Para agarrar más, ellos robaron siete tiendas con un rifle de doble barra.

"Solo queríamos dinero rápido," Tony recuerda.

En la séptima tienda, el cajero alcanzó el teléfono. El joven que llevaba el rifle disparó, y el empleado de la tienda cayó, una mancha roja creciendo a su costado.

¿Cómo vino a pasar esto?

De pequeño, Tony fue criado
por sus abuelos católicos en
Chicago, Illinois, y en la iglesia
de una tía creyente, él recuerda
como repetía el pasaje de
Juan 3:16 de la Biblia ante los
feligreses. Pero cuando cumplió
8 años, su padre, que vivía en

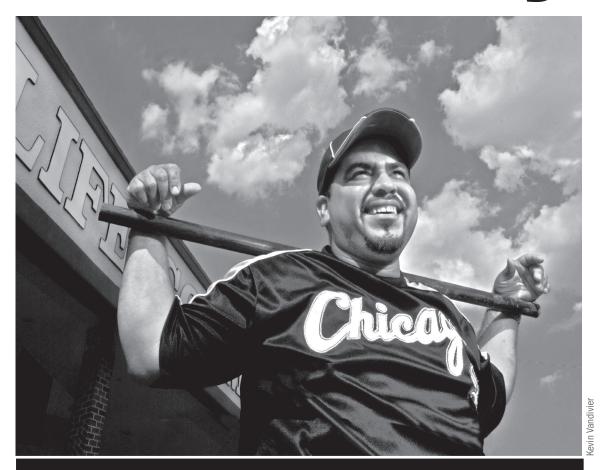
Dallas, Texas, trajo a Tony a vivir allí. Tony resintió el cambio – y el alcoholismo de su padre. Empezó a pelear en la escuela y sacar malas notas en sus clases.

"Cada semana," recuerda Tony, "yo tenía que traer una nota a casa explicando mi mal compartamiento, pero eso no me previno de continuar."

Tony robó para satisfacer la adicción de drogas que llegó a ser su espiral, y también huyó de casa para tratar de evitar las consecuencias de sus crímenes. Cada vez que él huía, su padre patrullaba las calles toda la noche en su búsqueda. Entonces Tony fallaba al reconocer el fuerte amor de su padre, pero ahora reconoce "mi padre nunca se dio por vencido por mí"

Después que lo arrestaron por los robos a las tiendas, le permitieron salir bajo la custodia de su padre bajo un juicio pendiente. Tony huyó nuevamente, escondiéndose de

Continúa en la pág. 2



Dondequiera que se marchaba, alguien perseguía a Tony Chantaca.

# Sabotaje en la Sala de Visitas

## **Por Lennie Spitale**

C

omo una cebolla, cada tema tiene muchas capas a si mismo. El tema de visitas

a prisión no es la excepción. Hasta libros enteros se podrían escribir acerca de varios aspectos de esta tema, desde transporte a la prisión hasta los procedimientos de

entrada y de regreso a casa.

Me gustaría mencionar algo diferente, algo que yo llamo "sabotaje en la sala de visitas."

Sabotaje en la sala de visitas es lo que pasa cuando estás con la esperanza de una buena visita con tu ser querido, cuando de repente todo va mal.

Por el cierre del evento, ambas personas terminan emocionalmente lastimadas, y después se sienten culpables por el sabotaje de su propia visita.

Era lo mismo cuando yo es-

taba en prisión, y aún sigue lo mismo el día de hoy. ¿Cúantas veces tú y tu visitante han sobre escuchado estas frases tan egoístas viniendo de la próxima mesa en la sala de visitas?

"¿Por qué te tardaste tanto? ¡Hace dos horas que te espero! ¡Me dijiste que llegarías a las 6:30!"

"¿Llamaste a mi abogado? ¿Por qué no lo hiciste? ¡Te dije que te encargaras de esto!"

"No te importa lo que me está pasando. Pues tú puedes levantarte y caminar fuera de aquí cuando terminamos la visita."

"Pensé que ibas a mandarme mi paquete. ¡Aún no he recibido nada!"

"¿Podrías dejar 30 miserables dólares más para mi comisaria?"

"¿Por qué no contestas cuando te llamo por teléfono? ¿Con quién estás saliendo?"

O a veces es el vistante el que trae el enfoque negativo.

"Tú no sabes lo que es cuidar a los niños y trabajar también. Tu hijo está haciendo muy mal en la escuela. No me escucha, y se mete en pleitos todo el tiempo."

"¿Por qué no me envías más dinero? No puedo para la renta."

"Tus llamadas cuestan demasiado. Ya no puedo seguir aceptándotelas."

"Escuché que alguien más te visita. ¿Quién es?"

"¡Cómo te atreves acusarme! No estaríamos en este desastre si no fuera por ti."

Y sigue y sigue ... ¿Qué pasó? ¿De dónde viene todo este enojo? ¿Cómo es que terminaron lastimando a las personas que más aman? ¿Por qué la visita tuvo que terminar en una nota tan amarga?

Algunas visitas están destinadas al fracaso desde el principio, como por ejemplo cuando la novia y la esposa llegan al mismo tiempo. Otras – como visitas entre esposo y esposa, o padre e hijos – empiezan a empeorarse cuando el estrés de la separación explota.

Todo este estrés tiene que ver con el dolor y la frustración de la separación. El prisionero lo está sintiendo. El visitante lo está sintiendo. Cosas pequeñas de repente se vuelven grandes. La sentencia parece eterno y la vela de la esperanza se está desvaneciendo. Todo eso es tan frustrante. Entre más larga sea la sentencia es más difícil.

El problema básico es que los dos mundos – el de la prisión y el de afuera – han chocado en la tierra de nadie llamada "sala de visitas."

Cuando platico con prisioneros, me dicen que se dan cuenta lo difícil que es para sus seres queridos visitarlos. La distancia puede ser larga y el precio de gas muy alto. Algunos de sus visitantes tienen muy poco dinero extra y tienen que depender del transporte público

de la buena voluntad de amigos para transportarlos. Algunos tienen que buscar a una niñera o pedir permiso de su jefe para poder llegar a la prisión. Y luego hay también la humillante experiencia de la entrada en la prisión: la línea larga, los armarios, las requisas, y los detectores de metal. Para cuando por fin te sientas, te sientes como si hubieras sido atrapado en una exhausta experiencia de remolino de vientos. Los visitantes saben que el interno solo tuvo que limpiarse, peinarse el pelo, y esperar que llamen su nombre para irse a la visita.

Pero el prisionero vive en un mundo cruel y negativo, y no siempre es tan fácil de superar las cosas e ignorarlas cuando llega la hora del encuentro. Para el visitante, especialmente si es tu cónyuge, las necesidades y dificultades de la vida en la exterior de la prisión son dos veces más difíciles.

¿Cómo se puede evitar el

Continúa en la pág. 2

# Carta del Editor

¡Bienvenidos a la primera edición de *Inside Journal*® en español! *Inside Journal* es una publicación de Prison Fellowship, la organización de ministerio a internos y sus familias más grande del país. *Inside Journal* fue publicado en inglés por prima vez en 1990, y ha sido un recurso popular, ofreciendo noticias e inspiración a la población encarcelado, desde entonces.

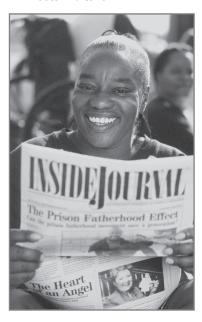
Me da mucha alegría compartir contigo la primera edición producida especialmente para presos hispanos. En Prison Fellowship, entendemos que muchos presos se encuentran detenidos o bajo sentencia en los Estados Unidos sin entender bien al inglés. Todavía quieres usar tu tiempo para mejorar tu vida y quizás crecer espiritualmente, pero es difícil encontrar recursos positivos en tu lengua materna. Por eso decidimos hacer *Inside* Journal en español.

Inside Journal en español es un programa piloto. Si habrán más ediciones depende de ti, de la recepción de nuestros lectores. Si te gusta lo que lees en *Inside Journal* y quieres ver más ediciones, o si tienes sugerencias, por favor escribe a **Director Editorial**, **Inside Journal**, **PO. Box 1790**, **Ashburn**, **VA 20146**.

Sinceramente,

A R Quinn

A.R. Quinn Director Editorial



### **Sabotaje** Viene de la pág. 1

fracaso en la sala de visitas? Aquí te damos 10 líneas de guía para el éxito.

1) Reconoce que el estrés de cada uno es real. Temporalmente tú y tu visitante están viviendo en dos mundos diferentes. Reconoce que las diferencias entre los mundos pueden crear malos entendimientos. Trata de comprender, pero no finjas que entiendes por completo los factores de estrés de la otra persona.

2) Dense cada uno el tiempo adecuado para expresar sus sentimientos. Recomiendo que él que hace tiempo deje que el visitante sea el primero que empiece a hablar de su vida. El mundo de la prisión es más pequeño, y el escuchar las experiencias de tu ser querido primero te ayudará a salir de ti mismo un poco.

3) Dense la libertad de ser honestos acerca de sus sentimientos (y si te sientes que no puedes con la verdad, no preguntes).

4) Hay tiempo para todo.

Ambos deben estar de acuerdo que es el tiempo adecuado antes de tratar ciertos temas sensitivos. Si uno (o ambos) no está emocionalmente listo para recibir algo, es mejor poner todo a un lado hasta el futúro.

5) Escucha con tu corazón, pero también con tus oídos. Para hombres, ten en mente que si el visitante es tu novia o esposa, no necesariamente quiere que tú arregles el problema. Solo quiere que tú sepas como se siente (puesto que ya te sientes frustrado en su incapacidad para solucionar los problemas de afuera, esto debe realmente ser solamente una ayuda para ti).

6) Identifica los problemas reales (pero haz esto con delicadez y respeto). La mayoría del tiempo, los problemas de la superficie no son problemas reales, y los conflictos tienen raíces más profundas. Por ejemplo, miembros de la familia podrían estar escondiendo sus sentimientos reales sobre todo el dolor que el encarcelado ha causado, pero tienen miedo de expresarlo.

7) La conversación no debe ser dominada por una sola persona. Pónganse de acuerdo para darse tiempo igual para hablar de lo que pasa en sus vidas.

8) Sé amable – todo no es sobre ti. Una vez escuché alguien decir: sean amables el un con el otro – todos están luchando grandes batallas." El encogido y envuelto mundo de la vida de la prisión puede causar que uno se enfoque en si mismo, e igualmente es fácil que las demandas y las responsabilidades de la vida exterior causen el mismo efecto.

 Comprométete al principio de cada visita a no pedir cosas irrazonables a la otra persona.

10) Pregunta de manera práctica como puede ser de ayuda a la otra persona.

Y aquí te ofrecemos líneas de guía para lectores cristianos:

1) Mantén una lista de oraciones para su visitante.

2) Lean los mismos pasajes bíblicos en los mismos días y discútanlos en la visitas.

Lennie Spitale es el autor de Prison Ministry y instructor de seminaries con Prison Fellowship.

# **Persiguiendo a Tony** *Continuado a pagina 1*

la policia y de su padre.
El primero de febrero del
1989, Tony fue aprehendido
huyendo de un vehículo robado. Fue presentado ante juicio
como adulto y sentenciado a

25 años.

"No se
preocupen
por mí,"
les aseguró.
"Este es mi
mundo."

### Cuando cae un relámpago

Para entonces, la poca fe que Tony tenía en su memoria desaparecía, y estaba llena de duda acerca de la doctrina cristiana. "Yo tenía 16, casi 17 años," dice Tony, "y no iba a ser el tonto de nadie."

La prisión solo afilaba su criminalidad; después de 10 años de encarcelamiento, estuvo en libertad cuatro meses en su primera salida. Tony regresó a un hoyo en donde no se miraba ninguna penetración de luz – hasta que un relámpago golpeó.

Tina, la tía de Tony, estaba embarazada cuando recibió la descarga de un rayo. Aunque sobrevivió, sus doctores recomendaron terminar su embarazo. Margie, otra tía de Tony, ofreció darle su vida a Dios si salvara al bebé de Tina.

Cuando el bebe de Tina nació saludable, Margie dio su vida a Cristo.

Margie y su esposo Mark empezaron a visitar a Tony, pero él se burló de sus palabras acerca de Dios. Pero la compasión que le mostraron lo dejó pensativo y confundido.

"No se preocupen por mí," les aseguró. "Este es mi mundo."

Ellos sollozaron por su sobrino, quien no pudo imaginarse una vida más allá de la prisión, pero, eventualmente, su perseverancia dio frutos.

"Dios empezó a darme un corazón tierno," dice Tony.

El empezó a orar antes de cualquier audiencia ante la comisión de libertad bajo palabra. Cuando se le negaba libertad, él renunciaba seguir a Dios nuevamente. Pero Dios nunca se dio por vencido.

En 2006 Tony escaneó su tarjeta de notas con frases escritas calculadas para impresionar a la persona que haría la entrevista en la siguiente audiencia. Pero algo hizo que él la tirara; por primera vez, él se acercó a Dios sin condiciones.

"Estoy cansado de juegos," confesó. "Si hago el resto del tiempo, está bien. Quiero conocer al Poder que está detrás de la gente que viene a prisión a visitarme. Ayúdame."

Tony quedó en estado de parálisis cuando se le ofreció la oportunidad de escoger: nueve meses en un programa de rehabilitación para adictos, o 18 meses en InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFI), un programa de entrada dirigido por Prison Fellowship y basado en la vida y enseñanzas de Jesucristo.

Tentado por el programa más corto, Tony recordó lo que le pidió a Dios. Aquí estaba la oportunidad de conocer el Poder detrás de su tía. Así que pidió que lo mandaran a IFI.

# "Dios nunca nos da la espalda"

"Él era una diferente persona," comenta sorprendida Margie, recordando la primera vez que visitó a Tony en IFI. En las cuatro horas de regreso a casa, Margie y Mark Iloraron lágrimas de agradecimiento.

Tony creció para conocer a Dios en la estructura de IFI, un ambiente con valores fuertes. También aprendió a dejar ir el dolor de su niñez y entendió las consecuencias de sus decisiones. Y cuando su plan de negocios ganó en la feria de negocios de IFI, "me cautivó, me dio un nuevo punto de vista acerca de mis capacidades."

Después de su salida Tony continuó en la segunda fase de IFI. Después de una difícil cacería de trabajo, él finalmente encontró un puesto con una compañía de tecnología y fue promovido a ser supervisor de proyecto. "Le confiaré con todo," dice el dueño de la compañía.

Tony también se casó con Annie, y se convirtió en el padrastro de Nathan, su hijo adolescente, y pronto le siguió el bebé Giovanni.

El nacimiento de Giovanni dejó que Tony tomara le determinación de no volver a prisión. "Hace dos noches," dice el papá, "yo sostenía a Giovanni y un pensamiento pasó por mi mente si hubiera la posibilidad de poder hacer algo de dinero rápido. Pero él me miraba ... y me di cuenta de que mi hijo me miraría como su ejemplo."

Por su ejemplo, Tony actualmente mira a su padre, acerca de celebrar 10 años de sobriedad. Ellos hablan diariamente.

Tony "entiende lo que es la

vida," dice su padre. Tony quiere usar su vida para ayudar a otros ex-prisioneros, pero por ahora él sirve y ama a su familia.

A pesar de algunos problemas transicionales, Annie dice que él está siendo "excelente."

Día tras día, él mira a Dios para fortaleza, porque, no importando que tan lejos Tony corrió en el pasado, "Dios nunca le volteó la espalda." ■



Actualmente Tony encuentra fuerza para vencer la tentación de drogas y "dinero rápido" en la Palabra de Dios.

2

# Las Buenas Nuevas acerca de Tiempo Duro

**Por Johnathan Kana** 

ste lugar es el infierno," dijo mi amigo. Estábamos los dos en el coro de la capilla, y seguido platicábamos de la Biblia, mientras caminábamos juntos en el patio

de recreaciones.

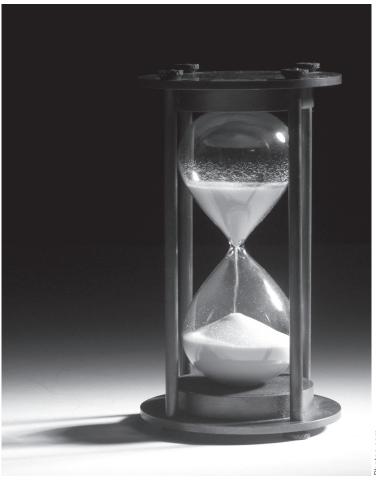
Un día el tema del Infierno se presentó. Mi amigo pensó que el infierno probablemente es muy parecido a hacer tiempo en prisión. Yo le pregunté que explicara lo que quería decir.

"Solo piénsalo," dijo, "Estás atrapado en un lugar donde verdaderamente no quieres estar. No te puedes ir. Eres un miserable. El tiempo parece interminable. Y cuando por fin termina no tienes nada que mostrar. Puedes mirar la libertad al otro lado del muro, pero al mismo tiempo parece estar a millas de distancia."

Me puse a pensar por un momento, y fue como poner el dedo en un nervio.

"Pero lo peor," continuó, "es que no puedes estar con los que tú más quieres. Estás totalmente separado de ellos. Hasta las visitas de fin de semana son un cruel recuerdo de este factor. Tú sabes que mereces estar aquí, y que tus propias decisiones te trajeron aquí, pero no puedes evitar resentir que tienes que estar separado de todo lo que hace que la vida tenga valor. En efecto es el Infierno. Tiempo duro para siempre.

Esto, por supuesto, es la definición de "tiempo duro." Nosotros los convictos sabemos que se paraliza el alma de terror de estar detrás de un desfile de horas y días interminable, manteniéndonos lejos de las personas y lugares que más amamos. No



nos gusta admitirlo, pero todos peleamos momento a momento, sin esperanza amenazante, que nos ahoga y nos destruye.

Por eso tenemos el dicho: "Haz tu tiempo. No permitas que el tiempo te haga a ti."

Interesantemente, hacer tiempo (y sentir el tiempo "hacernos") nos enseña mucho acerca de las consecuencias del pecado. Es por eso que de alguna forma, todos hacemos tiempo, ya sea en la celda de una prisión o en la parecida libertad del mundo. La Biblia dice que somos egoístas y somos condenados por nuestros pensamientos, palabras, y comportamientos que nos separan de Dios. "Por cuanto todos pecaron; todos quedan cortos de la Gloria de Dios" (Rom. 3:23). Dios ha puesto un lugar de exilio para

aquellos que Lo rechazan. Es lo que la Biblia llama el Infierno, y es el lugar adonde muchos de nosotros libremente elegimos ir, llevados por nuestras propias decisiones. Y es donde muchas de nosotros estamos apuntando, ¡aunque todavía no nos damos cuenta! La realidad del aguijón del Infierno es no tener esperanza y estar separados de Dios para eternidad. Esto es lo que la Biblia describe en términos de fuego eterno y rechinar de dientes. Todos, libres o encarcelados, corren ese peligro, pero los prisioneros saben lo que es una sentencia. Así como mi amigo observó ese día en el patio de recreaciones, pasando una eternidad separado de Dios es básicamente como hacer un tiempo duro ... por siempre.

# Prisioneros de Esperanza

Pero Dios aún no termina. "'Ven al lugar de refugio, todos ustedes prisioneros, El exclamó. '¡Pues hay esperanza aún! ¡Te prometo este día que tendrás doble misericordia para cada una de tus alabanazas!" (Zac. 9:12) Esa promesa especial está en un pasaje del Antiguo Testamento en que habla del Mesías, el Rey ungido que dirige una nueva fase del trabajo de Dios en la tierra. Ese mesías es Jesucristo, el mismo Dios nacido en la carne hace más de 2.000 años, todo hombre y también todo divino.

Jesús es el único Hijo de Dios. Un hombre que volteó el mundo al revés con Sus milagros y Sus enseñanzas acerca de Dios, un hombre que ofendió a los líderes religiosos de Su día, y que murió crucificado como resultado.

Nadie especulaba que el Mesías de Dios muriera, especialmente como un común criminal. ¡Solamente su muerte fue un crimen! Pero Dios nos amó en nuestra desesperada situación y tenía un plan para rescatarnos de ese camión de cadena.

Mira, cuando Jesucristo sufrió y murió en la cruz por nosotros, Él terminó la ira de Dios contra nuestro pecado. Él viajó al Infierno en nuestro lugar. El director de esa institución no tiene ya que reclamar sobre nosotros! Luego cuando Dios trajo a Su Hijo de regreso a la vida tres días después de Su muerte, Él proclamó que nadie tendría que abordar ese camión de cadenas otra vez.

¿Entiendes las buenas nuevas? ¡Tu eterna sentencia ha sido suspendida! ¡Has sido exonerado! ¡No más "tiempo duro" spiritual para servir! El Juez acaba de mandar tu perdón total.

El ex-prisionero Johnathan Kana completó diplomas en estudios bíblicos mientras entre rejas.

# ¿Todos a bordo?

El camión de cadenas está esperándote. Tú estás encadenado ya. Estás ya en línea para abordar ... Pero no tienes que subir. Si tú honestamente confiesas tus pecados y aceptas la muerte de Jesús como un sello del perdón de Dios, puedes empezar nuevamente las cosas. Tú puedes experimentar libertad profunda desde este instante – hacia eternidad. Dios no necesita que trabajes para ganar Su perdón. Pero sí te pide que te rindas a El. Y puedes hacer eso hablando con El con una simple oración, como esta:

Dios, no quiero vivir separado de Ti nunca más. Yo creo que Jesús murió para que yo no estuviera separado de Ti. Por favor ven a mi vida y rescátame. Hazme Tu hijo/hija para siempre. Enséñame a vivir como quieres que viva. Amén.

Si Lo invitaste a tu vida, o si quieres conocer mejor a Dios, Inside Journal quiere ayudarte. Puedes inscribirte para estudios bíblicos por correspondencia. Escribe a "Todos A Bordo" c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146.

# Nuevo Papa Lava Pies de Presos

by A.R. Quinn

Francisco, el primer Papa que viene de Ámerica del Sur, pasó Jueves Santo en el Casal del Marmo, un centro de detención para jóvenes en las afueras de la capital italiana. Allí lavó y besó los pies de 12 prisioneros jóvenes, incluyendo dos mujeres. La ceremonia de lavar pies se hace tradicionalmente cada Jueves Santo para imitar a

oma, Italia - Papa

sufrir la Crucifixión. "Este es un símbolo, es un señal. El lavar sus pies quiere decir

Cristo, quien lavó los pies de sus

discípulos durante la última cena

que compartió con ellos antes de

que estoy a su servicio," Francisco dijo al grupo, entre 14 y 21 años de edad.

"Ayúdense el uno al otro. Este es lo que Jesucristo nos enseña," dijo el Papa. "Este es lo que hago, y lo hago con mi corazón. Lo hago con mi corazón porque es mi deber. Como sacerdote y obispo, tengo que estar a su servicio."

En un video lanzado por el Vaticano, se mira el argentino, que tiene 76 años, arrodillándose en el piso de piedra de la cárcel mientras vació una copa de agua sobre los pies de doce jóvenes: pies negros y blancos, pies de hombres y mujeres, e incluso pies tatuados. Después de secar cada pie con una toalla de algodón, se inclinó y lo besó.

Papas previos hicieron el rito

de Jueves Santo en la Basicila de San Juan Laterano en Roma, escogiendo a 12 sacerdotes para representar los 12 Apóstoles a quienes Cristo les lavó los pies durante La Última Cena.

Antes de hacerse Papa, como Arzobispo de Buenos Aires, el hombre antes conocido como Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio celebraba el rito de lavar pies en cárceles, hospitales, y hospicios – parte de su servicio a los pobres y marginados. Muchas veces lavó los pies de niñas y mujeres.

El que Francisco incluyera a mujeres en su primer Jueves Santo como Papa fue notable, porque reglas de la Iglesia Católica excluyen a las mujeres del rito. Por lavar los pies de las dos prisioneras, Francisco ha causado

controversia.

En este Jueves Santo, sin embargo, Francisco se preocu-



paba más con esperanza que controversia o tradición. Tenía un mensaje simple para los jovenes presos, a quien saludó uno por uno después de la misa, dando a cada uno un huevo de Pascua.

"No pierdan la esperanza," dijo Francisco. "¿Comprenden? Con esperanza siempre pueden seguir adelante."

Entonces un joven preguntó por qué el Papa había venido a visitarlos.

Francisco respondió que vino porque "me ayuda a mantenerme simple y humilde, como debe ser un obispo."

El gesto, dijo, vino "de mi corazón. Las cosas del corazón no tienen que tener una explicación."

(FUENTE: Huffington Post)

# Entreteniendo Ángeles

**Por Jim Liske** 

a Navidad pasada asistí a una fiesta con Santa Claus, voluntarios, galletas, ponche, toneladas de juguetes y, ¡oh! claro que niños - 200 niños. La fiesta fue en una iglesia en Florida donde por varios años los miembros de la iglesia habían abierto sus puertas a niños de padres encarcelados (y a los adultos - sean madres, abuelas, tías, etc. - quienes los cuidaban).¡Era fascinante!

Mientras las familias llegaban a la iglesia y se sacaban fotos con Santa, los voluntarios pasaban bocadillos, perros calientes, y papas fritas. En estaciones de artesanías manuales, varios niños hacían tarjetas navideñas para mandarles a su papá o mamá encarcelado.

Observando a los niños decorando sus tarjetas, me senté al lado de un niño pequeño que tenía quizás seis o siete años de edad, y le pregunté sobre la tarjeta que estaba haciendo. La había decorado con botas, un establo, un caballo, y un sombrero de vaquero. Le pregunté si a su papa le gustaban los ca-

ballos. En voz baja me dijo que su papá había trabajado en un rancho ganadero y que cuando él regresara a casa volvería a trabajar en el mismo lugar. Le pregunté si alguna vez había visitado a su papá en la prisión, y callado movió su cabeza "no."

(Los animo a que lean "Sabotaje en la Sala de Visitas" en página 1 para consejos de como hacer de cada visita con sus seres queridos la mejor, cuando vengan.")

Vi que estaba trabajando en otra tarjeta, y le pregunté si le estaba mandando dos tarjetas a su padre.

Dijo, "No, esta es para mi tío." Se me quebrantó el corazón. Este pequeño, quien, debía estar jugando fútbol con su papá, o con su tío en ausencia de su papá - se encontraba en lugar haciéndoles tarjetas a los dos hombres, los cuales no podrán jugar con él por mucho tiempo.

Seguía platicando con él un poco más, cuando se escuchó el anuncio que el programa estaba por comenzar.

Él niño comenzó a retirarse cuando de repente se detuvo, dio una vuelta, y me dio un abrazo rápido. Supongo que él abrazó a la persona que más



parecía un papá o un tío en ese momento que pensaba en ellos y deseaba tenerlos en persona

A pesar de la tristeza de este momento, también fue un día de alegrías y esperanza para el pequeño niño, al igual que para los demás 200 niños y sus padres de crianza. Yo también estaba profundamente conmovido al compartir tiempo con estos "angelitos" de padres encarcelados, que son tan especiales

en los ojos de Dios, y renové mi compromise para asegurarme que Prison Fellowship (Confraternidad Carcelaria) y su programa de Angel Tree sirva a prisioneros y sus familias en muchos años por venir.

Angel Tree te ofrece la oportunidad de enviar un regalo a tu niño, comprado, envuelto, y presentado en nombre tuyo. Tu niño debe tener menos que 18 años y debe vivir en los E.E.U.U. No puedes tener ninguna

orden de juicio limitando tu contacto con el niño o su tutor legal. Regalos son entregados en diciembre, pero los formularios de participación deben ser entregados antes del 3 de septiembre. Los formularios de participación de Angel Tree están disponibles en español. Pídeselos a tu capellán o director de servicios religiosos.

Jim Liske es el director ejecutivo de Prison Fellowship Ministries.

# ilnscribe a Tus Hijos en Angel Tree!

# ¿Qué es Angel Tree?

Quizás te has enterado de Angel Tree, un programa de Prison Fellowship, pero no sabes cómo funciona. Angel Tree es una manera simple de mostrar a tus hijos que los amas durante la Navidad.

Angel Tree funciona así: Tú llenas un formulario de participación de prisionero, pidiendo a Angel Tree que te ayude a dar un regalo a tu hijo durante la Navidad (puedes sugerir una categoría de juguete que a tu hijo le gustaría). Durante el verano, el capellán recoge los formularios y los envía a Angel Tree. En otoño, voluntarios de Angel Tree llaman a la persona que cuida a tu hijo para averiguar cual regalo sería más adecuado para él. Antes de la Navidad, voluntarios compran regalos para dárselos a tu hijo en su casa o en una fiesta de Angel Tree. Tu hijo sabrá que el regalo viene de ti, el padre o madre que lo ama. También, se escribirá tu mensaje personal de cariño en la etiqueta del regalo.

## Dé un Regalo a Tu Hijo

Este verano tienes la oportunidad de inscribir a tu hijo para recibir un regalo navideño - y las Buenas Nuevas - en nombre tuyo. Los formularios de solicitud deben ser sellados antes del 3 de septiembre del 2013. Debes pedírselo al capellán de la prisión, y entregarlo al mismo cuando lo hayas

Hay algunas restricciones importantes del programa de Angel Tree, así que debes leer cuidadosamente las siguientes reglas antes de rellenar un formulario de participación.



A Program of Prison Fellowship®

- 1) **Debes ser** el padre, madre, padrastro, o madrastra del niño.
- 2) No puedes tener ningún orden judicial limitando tu contacto con el niño o la persona que lo cuida.
- El niño debe vivir en los Estados Unidos.
- 4) El niño debe tener entre 0 a 18 años de edad.
- 5) Debes llenar el formulario de participación completamente y de manera legible.
- 6) Debes firmar el formulario.
- 7) El formulario debe ser sellado el 3 de septiembre del 2013 o antes.



¡Consigue tu formulario hoy mismo! Un regalo especial de ti durante la Navidad ayudará a tu hijo a comprender que tú lo amas, y le dará un vínculo a una iglesia local que puede apoyar a tu familia en tu ausencia. Y lo mejor de todo, le dará la oportunidad de experimentar el amor maravilloso de

Angel Tree hace grandes esfuerzos para servir a cada niño elegible. A veces, a pesar de esos esfuerzos, si no podemos encontrar al tutor legal del niño, si el tutor niega participar, o si no hay suficientes voluntarios en un área local, es posible que no podremos servir a tu hijo. Cuando es posible, puede ser que voluntarios te darán un reporte indicando si pudieron servir a tu hijo.





**VOLUME 22, NO. 3** 

**SUMMER 2013** 

# INSIDE OUTNAL.

# A Woman on a Mission

by Beth Reid

lone in a county jail cell, Tish Belk was scared. She had been on the run for almost a year, and now she faced as many as 20 years in prison. She had never felt so lost.

As Tish looked around her empty cell, her eyes rested upon a Bible. She did not know how it got there, and she tried her best to ignore it. But as the book tugged at her, Tish finally gave in and flipped it open. She started to read.

Once she had picked up the Bible, Tish could not put it down. She read through the Bible chapter by chapter.

"I got to the book of Romans, and I started weeping and crying," remembers Tish. "I knew then that I had to give my whole life to the Lord, because He's the One that kept me through everything that I've been through."

Her "everything" entailed

depression, drugs, addiction, and abuse. At that moment, Tish knew that shedding a lifetime of rage and regret would be no easy task. Looking back now, however, Tish says her life has come full circle, and though her journey begins and ends in the same place, her heart has been changed forever.

## **A Vicious Cycle**

PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS

Tish grew up thinking fits of rage were a normal part of day-to-day life. Her father, an ex-Marine and Vietnam vet, suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. His wife and two children lived in constant fear of setting off yet another angry explosion.

"We walked on eggshells. He would get very angry and blow things way out of proportion," Tish says. "I swore I'd never be angry like my dad. But those dreaded vows ... that's where you mess up."

As wrong as it felt, Tish found herself copying her father's bitterness. Confused and depressed, Tish tried to get help, but in prescribing medications, doctors unknowingly set her on a path of addiction and on a constant quest for escape.

Nearly raped by a family member, Tish confided in her parents, who did not believe her. "As a child, you think you should be able to tell your parents everything," muses Tish. "When they don't believe you, everything gets crushed."

Tish began mixing her medications with alcohol. As she slid deeper and deeper into the darkness of despair, she turned to illegal drugs: first marijuana, then crack, and finally methamphetamines.

Eager to escape home, Tish graduated from high school and, at just 17, sought a precarious refuge within a young marriage. She had her first child, a daughter named Courtney, but after a year and a half, her marriage ended in divorce.

When Tish wed her second husband, both were addicts, and the marriage was rocky.



Tish came from a home filled with anger, but now she's found a peace nothing can shake.

Continued on page 2

# Coach Gibbs's Game Plan for Life

A Q&A with Coach Joe Gibbs

n summer 2013,

ESPN released a list of the "10 Greatest NFL Coaches of All Time." Number 9 on the list was Joe Gibbs, the legendary coach who led the Washington Redskins to three national championships. In more recent years, he's risen to the top of NASCAR racing. Coach Gibbs sat down with IJ to talk about his secrets to success – on the gridiron, on the racetrack, and in life.

IJ: After the NFL, you became a NASCAR owner. Why the switch?

Gibbs: When my oldest son, J.D., graduated from William and Mary [a college] we talked about what he wanted to do. Obviously he had seen me coaching while growing up and basically decided that he didn't want to go down that path, but would rather do something in



Coach Joe Gibbs talks to prisoners about setting goals and succeeding.

racing. Our family had always had a great interest in racing. I was still coaching at the time but started to make some calls about how to get into racing, and we were fortunate to find great people and sponsors to help us build our team. It's amazing when you look back at our first couple of years. We had about 18 people total back then and now we have

over 450. It is truly one of God's blessings that we have been able to grow the race team to what it is today.

IJ: You've had success in both the NFL and NASCAR. What's your secret?

Gibbs: I have always said that you win with people. That is true in football as well as racing.

around you to be successful. In football, it's the owner, players, coaches, and support staff. In racing, it's crew chiefs, the guys in the shop building the cars, drivers, and pit crews. You have to take the time to pick the right people and then hopefully motivate those people to be successful.

You have to have good people

IJ: Coach Gibbs, you've visited a number of prisons in recent years. What got you started visiting prisons?

Gibbs: I had a few opportunities throughout my coaching career to visit prisons, and [Prison Fellowship founder] Chuck Colson was a big part of that actually, but most recently it is something that I began shortly after starting Game Plan for Life. As part of our ministry, I began conducting outreach breakfast events after releasing the book back in 2009, and after that I was invited to go speak to a

prison in Florida. It was such a rewarding experience for me that we started to look for additional opportunities to speak in prisons in the same communities where we were having a Game Plan for Life event.

IJ: What sticks out the most about the time you've spent with prisoners?

Gibbs: I am always amazed how you have their full attention. These guys are listening and thinking about your message. Obviously they have had tough times in life that have gotten them where they are, but when you take the time to visit and speak with them, they are invested in your message.

IJ: What message do you bring to people when you go behind bars?

Gibbs: That we serve a God of second chances. No matter the mess in your life there is no

**Continued on page 2** 

# **Stopping the Shooting**

## Guest Column: Jim Liske

On December 14, 2012, 20-year-old Adam Lanza shot and killed his own mother while she was still in her pajamas. He then got into a car and drove five miles to Sandy Hook Elementary School in the quiet suburb of Newtown, Connecticut, a place where there had only been one murder in the previous decade. When he got there he killed five adults and 20 children using a number of assault rifles and high-capacity magazines. Most of the children were first-graders.

When police entered the building, Adam took one final life: his own.

As is common whenever we face a tragedy on this scale, the Newtown massacre prompted grief, soul-searching, and anger all over our country. Lawmakers have been scratching their heads and asking, "How can we make sure this never happens again? What laws do we need to pass to protect the most vulnerable among us from such



unspeakable acts of horror?"

So there have been efforts to get certain kinds of weapons off the streets, to ban high-powered assault rifles or high-capacity magazines that were really designed for military purposes and could have no legitimate use for civilians. There have been calls for tougher background checks on gun purchasers. Groups that defend Americans' second-amendment rights have been fighting back, saying that the government doesn't have the right to say what kinds of guns people can own.

Common-sense laws that protect people are an important part of the solution to any

kind of crime, but to a certain extent, I believe all the debate is just window dressing. We can't ever write enough laws to change people's hearts, and that's where crime starts. You can't fix something that's broken by just covering it up – you have to deal with the real problem. And that's the kind of healing only God can bring to us as individuals – and as a nation.

For His Kingdom,



We'd like to hear from you. How do you think children can be made safer? How do we reduce the rates of gun violence – both in quiet suburbs like Newtown and in places where gun deaths are a tragic and frequent reality? You can write and tell us your opinion at: Letters to the Editor, *Inside Journal*, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA, 20146-1790.

### **Coach Gibbs**

Continued from page 1

mess that is too big for God. It is never too late to join God's team. Just ask Him into your life, ask for forgiveness and you can still have a tremendous impact on those around you.

IJ: Is there anything that prisoners have taught you?

Gibbs: Obviously they have been through some difficult times, but it is a great reminder that it is never too late to join God's team. The only thing we leave here on earth is the influence we have on others, and even in their current situation they can have an impact on those around them. They still have many people depending on them. Many of them have families depending on them.

They can still have a tremendous influence on others even in their current situation.

IJ: If there's one thing you could make sure all of our readers know, what would it he?

Gibbs: We all have messes in our lives certainly, but there is no mess too big for God. We just need to invite Him into our lives, ask Him for forgiveness and then start living for Him. Every one of us can have an impact on another and regardless of all the successes or failures we may have in this life, the only real thing we leave behind is the influence we have on others.

## **Subscription Info**

At *Inside Journal®* (*IJ*), we receive many letters each week from inmates asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers – however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, *IJ* is *only* available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

# **A Woman on a Mission** *Continued from page 1*

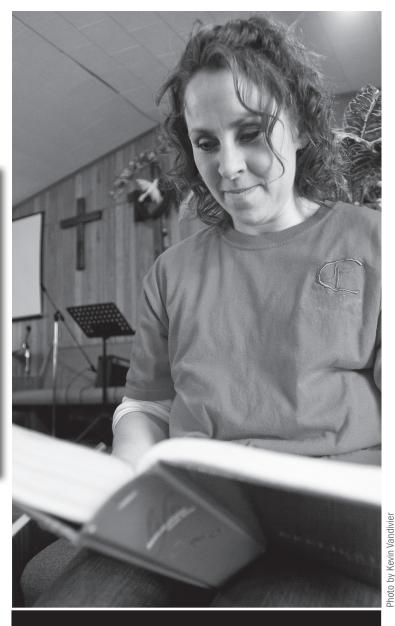
Still, the couple had two children together. Christy and Clint entered a world where drugs were commonplace and the rules of the street were law.

"I swore I'd
never be angry
like my dad.
But those
dreaded vows
... That's
where you
mess up."

This destructive lifestyle tore at Tish and her family. Drug charges began to stack up against her. With her husband already locked up, Tish left her children with relatives and fled. After spending a year on the lam, Tish was caught and went to jail – where she finally found the "escape" she had long desired.

## Rounding a Corner

Almost immediately after her arrest, Tish says, God began revealing Himself to her. Three charges on her file should have earned her up to 20 years behind bars, but the judge dismissed most of the charges



Tish came full circle on her life of drug addiction.

Today she is a certified drug counselor.

and sentenced her to two years instead. "The Lord was showing me who He was," says Tish.

Tish followed this conviction into a Prison Fellowship transformational ministry unit at the Dawson State Jail in Texas. This faith-based program introduced her to Lyn Wright, a former Prison Fellowship employee who still volunteered in prisons in the Dallas area. Lyn became Tish's mentor.

With Lyn beside her, Tish flourished within the program and its many classes. Soon,

student became teacher. Tish took over one of the parenting classes and passed on to fellow inmates what she had learned about being a faithful parent. More than anything, though, she was also eager to share what she had learned with her children.

After her release, Tish says
God and Lyn led her to enter
an intense, year-long reentry
program at Calvary Commission
Bible School in Lindale, Texas.
The director and counselors
were so impressed with Tish,
that when she believed God
was leading her to leave the
program to return to her children, they allowed her the privilege of completing the program
requirements from home.

# Circled Back Again

Tish has been out of prison

for several years. She became a certified drug counselor and has moved back to her old neighborhood. She is even living in the same home where she was raised. And though it is true that she has circled back to where it all started, she is discovering new and completely transformed beginnings.

She is rebuilding loving relationships with her parents. She is sharing her faith with her children every day. As the youth pastor at her church, Tish is ministering to the kids of the people she used to sell drugs to and do drugs with.

"The Lord brings you full circle with the past so you can face it the way you are now instead of the way you used to be," says Tish, beaming. "I'm just on a mission for the Lord." ■

# PRAYER WARRIORS CORNER



This quarter please pray for the children of prisoners:

- Pray for thousands of children of prisoners attending summer camp this year, that God will fill their hearts with joy as they enjoy nature and learn about His love for them
- Pray for children visiting their parents at correctional facilities, that they would not be overwhelmed by this difficult time. Ask God to help them cope with long rides to the prison, the intimidating search procedures, and the complicated emotions that come up.
- Praise God for churches that care for the children of prisoners. Ask Him to raise up more, so that prisoners' children can have the support of a local church to lean on.

Inside Journal | Summer 2013

# Coming Clean, Feeling Free

by A. R. Quinn

yler Hamilton lied for 13 years. As one of the world's best cyclists, the blue-eyed, charming American from Massachusetts raced on the U.S. Postal Service team with Lance Armstrong. He was in the summer Olympics in 2000 and 2004 and won a gold medal in a time trial. He was famous. He was successful. He was on top of the world. But Hamilton had a terrible secret - he was using banned substances to boost his performance.

In 2010 Hamilton was subpoenaed to appear before a grand jury convened to investigate doping in the sport of professional cycling. He admitted what he had done, and he gave back his gold medal. In 2012, he co-wrote a book about his experiences called The Secret Race: Inside the Hidden World of the Tour de France: Doping, Cover-ups, and Winning at All Costs.

### "Secrets ... eat you alive"

Hamilton may have lost his reputation and his gold medal, but he found something else: freedom.

After he confessed to his wrongdoing, Hamilton told The Guardian, a U.K. newspaper, that he finally felt liberated from the pain and depression that had dogged him for a long time. "I lied for year and years," he said, "And the thing about lies and secrets is that they eat you alive from the inside. I would not wish that pain on anvone."

Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong didn't come clean about his own doping history until 2013. In a 2012 interview, Hamilton urged his old teammate to tell the truth and move on with his life. "I can speak from experience that telling the truth feels so good," he said. "I didn't have much to look forward to before I told the truth. I still wish I'd made the right choice [in the past], but I'm really excited about moving forward with the second part of my life. I couldn't have said that two years ago."

"My strength evaporated" David, a king who ruled the ancient nation of Israel, learned a

similar lesson. Although he loved God, he caved into temptation cover up his first crime, he committed a second: he arranged to have Bathsheba's husband killed in battle, where it would look like just another casualty of war.

David thought he could get

"When I refused to confess my sin," David wrote, "my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night [God's] hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in

and slept with a beautiful woman named Bathsheba, who was married to one of his soldiers. Then, to

away with it, and no one would find out. But even if he could hide his sin from the world, he couldn't hide it from God. His guilt tortured

the summer heat." (Psalm 32:3-4,

Tyler Hamilton, who later confessed to doping, rides in the Tour de California in 2009.

New Living Translation)

The prophet Nathan finally confronted David about his crimes. and he confessed. When he did, like Tyler Hamilton, he finally started to feel free.

"Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt," he wrote. "I said to myself, I will confess my rebellion to the Lord. And He forgave me! All my guilt is gone." (Ps. 32:5)

David's sin still had some very serious consequences for him and his family, but God forgave him. The guilt that was eating him alive finally vanished. And God was able to pick up the pieces and use David in significant ways. In fact, David was the great-great-great... (a lot of greats!)-grandfather of Jesus.

# **True Confessions**

You might be carrying around a secret - and it feels like having a giant weight chained to your leg. You can't get rid of it, and you can't move on with your life. But there is hope in Jesus, who died to pay the penalty for every sin, including yours - and who rose again so that you, too, can have a new life.

You might still be facing the consequences of sin. You might be facing some hard time, and you might have a long way to go to get your family or friends to trust you again. But God can set you free from the crushing weight of secret sin. How do you start?

With confession: Tell Him what's weighing you down. Tell Him you can't make it on your own and you need Him. Tell Him that you trust Him to save you from your sins through His death on the cross, and ask Him to lead you forward in a new direction - one that leads to life. (Psalm 51, also by David, is a great example of a prayer of confession.)

Don't keep your decision to follow Christ a secret! Tell your chaplain and ask about baptism. Tell Christian brothers and sisters. And tell us at Inside Journal. We'd like to help you get started in a free correspondence Bible study (and also an NIV Bible, if you don't have access to one), available through one of our ministry partners. Just write to "True Confessions," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790.

# Getting Out? 11 Things to Do

ou hear that you're getting out soon. What can you do to get ready? A lot, really. But it will depend on when you start.

If you thought you'd never get out, only to have an officer say in 30 days you're hitting the streets, you're going to feel a little panic. Don't wait. Tackle the most important things first (a place to live, someone to meet you, drug treatment, ID) and work your way down (make a résumé, plan your celebration). The sooner you start, the more you can prepare, eliminate the panic, and impress those around you that you're serious about never coming back.

## **Take Advantage of Pre-Release Programs** in Your Facility (excerpted from Connections 2009, by Stephan Likosky)

Many pre-release units in prisons have specially trained staff to help you plan your reentry into society. Most prerelease units maintain updated listings of government and community-based agencies which can be of help to you in finding a job, locating a drug program, or addressing any of a multitude of needs. You might also encourage your prerelease center to invite in, as some already do, representatives from community agencies or private companies that do a large amount of hiring, to give presentations.

## **Gather Together All of** the Documents That You Will Need (from Connections 2009)

In order to apply for jobs and be eligible for most private or government programs, you are required to have certain kinds of documentation. If you begin to collect what you need now, you will save a lot of valuable time and frustration. At the very least, be sure to have a social security card (sometimes a number alone

is not enough) and proof of identification (a birth certificate, baptismal papers, driver's license or non-driver's photo ID, for example). Each agency has its own requirements for documentation, but the following are commonly required, or may help in increasing your chances for eligibility:

- **Military Discharge Papers**
- Alien Registration Card (for Non-U.S. Citizens)
- · Prison Discharge Papers (given to you upon release)
- Proof of Education (college transcripts or GED certificate, for example)
- Working Papers (required for persons under 18 years of age)
- Proof of Functional **Disability**
- **Certificate of Relief from Disabilities**
- · Certificate of Good Conduct

Of course, not all of these documents can be obtained easily, if at all, while you are in prison, but collect what you can, and remember that, in

some cases, a family member or friend on the outside may be of help. (Please note: Inside Journal does not have the capacity to help you obtain these items.)



## **Pre-release Success Checklist**

THE FOLLOWING CHECKLIST contains things to do prior to release. Failing to complete most of these items befor release can increase your chances of returning to prison either on technical violations or for new crimes.

- ✓ Get social security card and other forms of ID. (certified copy of birth certificate, photo ID).
- ✓ Complete any in-prison reentry programs available.
- ✓ Clear outstanding warrants, charges, and detainers.
- ✓ Clear aliases.
- ✓ Seal any and all parts of criminal history that future employers don't need to see.
- ✓ Complete drug treatment program or find a program in your community immediately after release.
- ✓ Form a job search plan (make a résumé, network with friends and family).
- ✓ Secure short-term housing.
- ✓ Make a celebration plan for release date.
- ✓ Contact Prison Fellowship for more resources. (www.prisonfellowship.org)
- ✓ Get directions and a ride to a local church on the first Sunday of your freedom.

# **Motherhood Without Bars**

by S.B. Matthews

wo programs, Drew House and JusticeHome, have emerged over the past few years to rehabilitate mothers charged with felonies and to provide a place for them to reconnect with their children. Nearly 1.3 million women are under the authority of the criminal justice system in the United States, and two-thirds of them are mothers of a child under 18. When these mothers go to prison, their children often get lost in the foster care system and turn to a life of crime. Both of these programs aim to decrease the rate of family imprisonment and give these mothers a chance to form lasting relationships with their children.

Drew House, started by the district attorney's office of Brooklyn, N.Y., opened its doors in 2008. The house, which is located in a residential community in Brooklyn, has six apartments. Five are reserved for mothers, while one spot is left for the house manager.

District Attorney Theresa Fabi believes this program allows mothers of young children to connect with other women in a noncompetitive environment, likely for the first time. "They watch each other's kids and



Innovative facilities seek to help mothers form bonds with their children while serving their sentences.

plan recipes together. We are showing them that a functional existence is possible," she said.

The program's goal is to break the cycle of crime that often gets passed from a mother to her children, "When a child's mother, typically their primary caregiver, goes to jail, he or she never gets made whole. [We want to] heal the mothers and heal the kids," said Fabi. The program has graduated 12 women and around 26 children, all of whom have stayed out of the system.

### **Time of Growth**

Beth, a former inmate at Minnesota Correctional Facility at Shakopee, can attest to the hardships of being a mother while serving a prison sentence. Beth had her daughter

three months before she entered prison and worried her daughter wouldn't know who she was when she got out. "I was really afraid of not having that relationship. But I learned that when a door would shut. God would just open a new door to let me grow," she said.

Beth believes that having a daughter motivated her to lead a positive lifestyle both in and later out of prison. She said, "It propelled my fight in prison - It made me want to do everything possible to be as healthy as possible-mentally, spiritually, and physically. I looked at prison as my healing time. God's hand was over me the whole time."

## **Mothers at Home**

Because of the concerns Beth and many other women have about their relationships with their children, more organizations like Drew House have developed to prioritize incarcerated mothers. For instance, JusticeHome, which was inspired by the Drew House, allows women to serve time in their home rather than in a traditional prison setting. The program is available to women who are facing a minimum of six months of incarceration as a result of felony charges. It will tentatively work with 45 women a year who will be enrolled in the system from six to eight months.

Alexandra Villano, director of strategic initiatives for the Women's Prison Association, believes JusticeHome "will benefit mothers involved in the program because of the special importance of family for women. When these women receive relevant support, [they as well as their families] realize significant positive changes and embrace law-abiding futures," she said.

## **Parenting Motivation**

Amanda, a prisoner at Washington Corrections Center for Women, said in a documentary about residential parenting programs that she believes having her child with her on a regular basis motivates her to be a better mother. She says, "If you're not a good mom, they can easily take your child away."

## Staying in Touch

Even if you can't be with your kids, there are still plenty of ways to show them you love them. Giving your child a Christmas gift through Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program is a great way to accomplish this. If you are interested in participating, ask your chaplain for the form, which is due by **September 3.** Once you complete it, he or she will submit it for you.

Amanda knows she would have a very different relationship with her daughter if she didn't get to see her on a daily basis. "I'm glad my daughter is here. You want to be here with them, to cuddle with them when they cry and put them to sleep," she said.

Another mother in the documentary, Samantha, also feels blessed that she can participate in this special program, as it has changed her frame of mind. She says, "Prison saved me. I've learned my lesson, and nothing's going to take me away from my kids. I've found something more important than getting high: forming a relationship with someone who loves me." ■

# Sign Your Children Up for Angel Tree!

# **What is Angel Tree?**

Maybe you've heard of Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program, but you're not sure how it works. Angel Tree is a simple way to let your children know that you are thinking about them at Christmas.

Angel Tree works like this: You fill out an application asking Angel Tree to give your child a gift from you at Christmas (you can suggest what kind of gift you think your child would like). During the summer, your chaplain collects all the applications and sends them to Angel Tree. In the fall, Angel Tree volunteers call the person who takes care of your child to verify what gift your child would like to receive. Before Christmas, Angel Tree volunteers will buy and wrap the gift. The gift will be delivered to your child's home or given to your child at an Angel Tree Christmas party along with a presentation of the Gospel. Your child will be told that the gift is from you - their mom or dad who loves them! Plus, your brief, personal message to your child will be written on the gift tag.



Angel Tree® is a registered trademark of Prison Fellowship

## **Give Your Child a Gift**

It might still be summer, but now is the time to sign your children up to receive a Christmas present from you through Angel Tree. Applications must be postmarked by September 3, 2013. You must ask your chaplain or program coordinator for an application, and either the chaplain or program coordinator must submit it for you when you are done.

There are some important restrictions to the Angel Tree program, so please read carefully before filling out an application:

- 1) You **must** be the child(ren)'s father, mother, stepfather, or stepmother.
- 2) There **must not be a court order** restricting your contact with the child(ren) or their caregiver(s).
- 3) Your child(ren) must live in the United States.
- 4) Your child(ren) must be 18 years old or younger.
- 5) The form must be filled out completely and legibly.
- 6) The form must be signed.
- 7) The form must be postmarked by **September 3, 2013.**

Get an application and sign your kids up today! A special gift from you at Christmas will help them know that you love them, and it will connect them with a church that can come alongside your family in your absence. Best of all, it will give them an opportunity to experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

Angel Tree makes great efforts to serve every eligible child. Sometimes, however, if we are unable to locate your children's caregiver, if the caregiver refuses to participate, or if there are not enough Angel Tree volunteers in a local area, we may not be able to deliver gifts to your children.







Managing Editor, A.R. Quinn; Writers, Jim Liske, S.B. Matthews, A.R. Quinn, Beth Reid; Graphic Designer, Sheri Powell

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# NSIDEOUTAL **VOLUME 22, NO. 4 FALL 2013** PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS

# A Soldier's New Mission

## by Carolyn Kincaid

s a young man Epifanio "Pefee" Arzapalo thought he knew what he wanted - and how to take it. He describes his lifestyle in his native Grand Junction, Colo., as a combination of "drinking, carousing, fighting, stealing, lying, [and] intimidation. And intimidation was just, scaring other people into doing what I wanted them to do, whether verbally or through threats of physical harm."

But Pefee could see where that life would eventually take him. His "associates" were winding up in jail or sitting at home waiting for food stamps. He didn't want that to be his life. In October 1975, he saw a shiny poster of a bearded man in a top hat with a beckoning finger. "Uncle Sam wants you," the poster said.

The advertisement struck a chord in Pefee. He was longing for some structure, and a

chance to change his life. He signed his future over to the military and left for training. He didn't tell his wife or two small children where he was going.

### A Soldier's Lie

The Army did give Pefee some structure, but the inner change he sought proved elusive.

"I took all my bad habits with me. The adultery, the drinking, the spending money. It was iust a mess, and I wrapped my children and my wife back up in the mess I thought I had left in Grand Junction."

For over 16 years, Pefee bounced from one army base to another, living as though he had no family.

"I didn't know God. I chose not to know God. It drove my family farther away instead of bringing them closer," he admits.

By 1990 Pefee had served in and survived Operation Desert Storm as the leader of a biological and chemical weapons squad. He saw some terrible

things that stayed with him. He carried home some deep wounds in the form of a hip injury and post-traumatic stress disorder, a kind of psychological injury that can stick with a person for years. He returned to the States a man damaged by war, and he searched for relief at the bottom of a bottle of alcohol.

### **Doors Open for a New Life**

A few years later, Pefee sat in a drunken haze in a holding cell, knowing that he was facing a long prison sentence for attempted murder. "Lord, You get me out of this situation," he slurred, "and I will let everybody know that it was You. I'll go to church. I'll read Your Bible."

A voice interrupted Pefee's attempted bribery: You're going to prison, but you will not be alone. Pefee remembers the exact words with tears in his eyes. He says that he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior that day.

For years Pefee was incarcerated in Nebraska, where he spent time delving deep into



When Pefee hit rock bottom, he turned to Jesus and found hope.

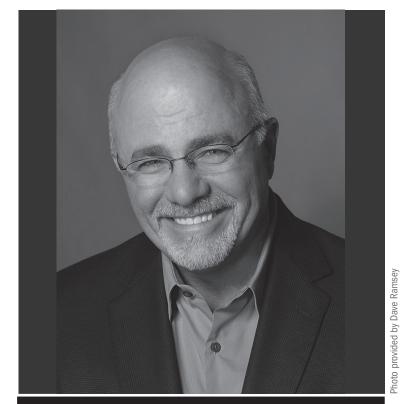
Continued on page 2

# Your Money and Your Life

A Q&A with Dave Ramsey

t's tempting to look at people who 'have it all' - the nicest clothes, a new car, a perfect house - and wish that we had their lives. But behind that picture of perfection, there's often a lot of debt and bad financial habits - legal or illegal - and when we chase it, we wind up in trouble.

Dave Ramsey knows that firsthand. By the time he was 26, he was making \$250,000 a year and had a net worth of a little over a million dollars. But when he lost it all and had to start over, he realized that he needed to look at money from a different angle. Since then, he's become an expert in helping people get out of debt and handle their money wisely. He is the author of a book called "Financial Peace," and he has a nationally syndicated radio show



Dave Ramsey is the best-selling author of "Financial Peace"and "Total Money Makeover."

covering financial topics. Inside Journal interviewed Dave to see what financial advice

he would offer to our readers.

IJ: What are some of the most

### frequent mistakes people make with their money? What are the most common misunderstandings?

Dave: The most common mistake people make with their money is they don't bother. They don't have a plan or a clue where it goes. If you don't pay attention to your money, you'll wander through life, and then wake up at some point and wonder where it all went.

One of the biggest myths people believe about money is that debt is a tool they can use to prosper. My argument is that debt brings on enough risk to offset any advantage that could be gained by using debt. I used to believe this lie myself. Only after losing everything I owned, and finding myself bankrupt, did I start factoring in risk.

IJ: Why do people fall into traps with money?

Dave: Too many people buy things with money they don't have to impress people they don't even like. If you're not worried about what other people think of you, it's easier to say "no" when you can't afford something or don't have the money in the bank. In our culture, it's normal to have lots of credit cards, car loans, and other debt. It's O.K. to be weird.

### IJ: What does it take to start handling money wisely?

Dave: One of the biggest factors that keep people from winning with money is not realizing they are the problem with their spending habits. I've found over the years that personal finance is 80 percent behavior and only 20 percent head knowledge. What to do isn't the problem; actually doing it is the problem. If you can control the person you look at in the mirror every day, you can win with money.

**Continued on page 2** 

# **Your Letters**

### 'Stopping the Shooting'

Being a criminal myself serving 15 years for armed robbery here in Florida, let me tell you I'm not about to go out and try to buy a gun from a gun shop. Why spend the money and time and effort, when if I want one at any time I can take one from your - "the legal citizen's" - house or car. I will get just as much time in prison for possession a bought gun as a stolen one. Time is time. So no amount of regulations or background checks is going to matter.

- R. M., Florida

Jesus Christ is really the answer to everything, but we have to be honest with the only one who truly loves us. I saw a young man walking around acting and talking tough. This one guy called him and hugged him like a true friend, and you should have seen the change come over this tough young man, it was cool.

- J.D.M., California



The way to keep children safer is to stop trying to make laws that infringe upon a person's Second Amendment rights so that they can protect their children and families. Allow everyone - regular citizens or ex-cons (because I'm soon to be one) to have their Second Amendment right to bear arms. To reduce the rate of gun violence, teach more gun safety and how and why guns are really to be used.

- W.S.R., North Carolina

Banning certain guns has nothing to do with the situation, and it's very ignorant for anyone to

think that this would stop the killings ... Until we value the lives of others the way we value ourselves - or the way God values us - the gun violence and killings are not going to stop.

- K.M., Massachusetts

We need to stop the sale of military-style weapons, which no one can deny, but I'm of a mind that a Band-Aid won't heal a broken leg. We need to heal the hearts and minds of people who would even contemplate such a thing as murder, or any type of violence. And we can only do that through our own loving and caring actions toward others."

- T.S., Florida

Because of my work I got to know a lot of youth ranging from 16 years to 21 years old. I advised many of them who had had evil enter their minds, through drugs, and friends of theirs who were steering them wrong and using them. ... I gave them hope and some started thinking about how to set things right.

- N.A.A., California

### **Your Money** Continued from page 1

### IJ: What does God say about handling money?

Dave: The Bible has more than 800 scriptures about money and personal finance. It gives lessons for taking care of your household, staying out of debt, doing a budget, and much more.

### IJ: What's the first step to staying out of trouble?

Dave: If you're going to win with money you have to be intentional, and that means having a budget. The word "budget" has gotten a bad rep, but it's really just a written plan for your money. When people start spending their money intentionally, they actually experience

more freedom!

### IJ: What about after release? Starting out on a minimumwage job, how can an exprisoner stay out of financial trouble?

Dave: It's easy to fall back into old habits, especially with money. You can win with money, but it will take sacrifice and it will cost you. You'll have to learn how to say new words, like "no." You have to make a commitment to yourself to get control of your money and never go back into debt. It will be hard, especially if you're making minimum wage. But if you will make the sacrifices now that most people aren't willing to make, later on you will able to live as those folks will never be able to live. ■

# **Subscription Info**

At Inside Journal® (IJ), we receive many letters each week from inmates asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers - however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is *only* available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

### **Soldier's New Mission** Continued from page 1

God's Word for hours a day. And then he learned about a faith-based life transformation program for inmates at Four Mile Correctional Facility in

"I took all my bad habits with me. The adultery, the drinking, the spending money. It was just a mess ..

Cañon City, Colo. He applied for a transfer to that program and waited to see if he would be accepted.

On April 1, the chaplain at Four Mile contacted Pefee and told him he had been accepted into the program. "I thought it was an April Fool's joke!" Pefee

A new chapter in Pefee's life began when he met his new mentor, a volunteer named Ron. Ron was, like Pefee, a veteran, having served in Vietnam. Following his return to the United States, Ron lost both



Pefee prays with his mentor, Ron, who taught him how to live the Christian life.

- he's had times of employment and unemployment, but he's doing his best to make sure that he is a competitive job candidate. He had never used a computer before being released, so he has gone to libraries to learn to use the latest technology. And he recommends that prisoners use their time to complete courses from an accredited educational institution that will give them transferable credits.

He also started trying to rebuild bridges with his family. Pefee has seven children from five different relationships. He's not proud of it, but "that's just fact," he says.

He started by contacting them and asking their forgiveness for the mess he had made in the past. Some have forgiven him, and some are still deciding what they think of the father they never really knew.

Pefee is O.K. with whatever comes his way. "I'm letting God drive," he says. ■

laughs.

legs in a helicopter accident, but he did not let that deter him from reaching out to those behind bars.

"Pefee was walking in a tough place," Ron recalls. Through prayer, Bible studies, and reminders to be on his guard against temptation, "I tried to get him to be a productive citizen and walk a Christian life," Ron says.

And Pefee took to heart the advice Ron gave him.

For six months, Ron faithfully visited Pefee once a week for fellowship and mentorship, preparing Pefee for reentry into society as his sentence was coming to a close.

Pefee was released from prison in October 2011. And though many people are skeptical of "jailhouse religion," the changes in his life have stuck.

He started going to church with Ron and his wife, Jan, which gave him stability and a place to start building relationships in the community.

"I am always calling the pastor 'chaplain," Pefee laughs. "It's hard for me to get the terminology in place!"

One of Pefee's biggest challenges has been finding a job

# PRAYER WARRIORS CORNER



This quarter please pray for prison ministry across the country:

- Pray for the growth of new seminary-level courses being offered in facilities across the country.
- Pray for mentors to come alongside brothers and sisters of the Church inside the walls as they prepare to reenter
- Pray for churches as they minister to many children of prisoners through Angel Tree.

# A Future King Is Born

by A. R. Quinn

n July 22, 2013, a baby boy was born at St. Mary's Hospital in Paddington, England. He weighed 8 pounds, 6 ounces, and he was a normal, healthy child. Well, maybe not quite normal ...

The baby was the child of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and one day, he will be the king of England.

After the baby - named George Alexander Louis, or His Royal Highness Prince George of Cambridge was born, a formal announcement was put on an easel outside of Buckingham Palace to inform the public. Gun salutes marked the great event in Bermuda, London, New Zealand, and Canada. Church bells rang. Important buildings across England were lit up with blue lights. A famous composer wrote a song to be the baby's Iullaby. The Royal Mint put out a special-edition coin. Cheering fans gathered outside the hospital to welcome the littlest member of the royal family, and the first family photo was plastered across the

front of magazines and newspapers across the globe.

The birth of a future king is a big deal.

#### The Unlikely King

Another little boy was born many years ago in Judea, a small, unimportant territory on the edges of a powerful empire. His mother was not a duchess - she was a girl from a poor family. The baby wasn't born in a well-equipped hospital. His only protection was a shelter built for animals, because the local hotel didn't even have any rooms for them. There were no gun salutes or commemorative coins, and the first people to hear about the birth were some smelly shepherds hanging out in the hills with their sheep.

But even though the circumstances surrounding the birth were very different, this baby boy would also be a king one day. His parents named him Jesus.

### The Rescue Plan

To understand how this baby could be a king, we have to go back a little bit farther in history.

The Bible tells the story of how God created the world and people

to be perfect, whole, and happy, enjoying a close relationship with Him. But people rebelled. They did not want to do things God's way, and the result was chaos, pain, and ultimately, separation from God.

But God, who loved the world and all the people He made, couldn't let things stay that way. He came up with a plan to rescue people – to bring them back into a close relationship with Him, where once again they could be whole, happy, and at peace: When the time was right, He would send His Son to earth as a messenger, to show lost and hurting people the way back home to God, and to pay the price for all the wrongs they had done. He would be called the Chosen One, or "Messiah."

God told people in ancient times what to look for, so they would recognize the Messiah when they saw Him. For example, the Jewish prophet Isaiah wrote, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Other places in the Old Testament - or first part of the Bible - indicated where the Messiah would be born and what would happen during his life.

But by the time Jesus, God's Messiah sent to save the world, was born, most people didn't recognize that He was a king. They were expecting somebody flashier, somebody more powerful, somebody more ... king-like. They wanted somebody who would overthrow the oppressive government with military muscle. They definitely weren't expecting an ordinary-looking baby with poor parents.

When Jesus grew up, He did

everything the Old Testament writers predicted. He taught people the way to God. He healed people. He performed miracles. But still, most people weren't convinced He had what it took to be a king. The religious leaders actually conspired to have Him put to death by the government, and before He was executed, the guards put a crown made of sharp thorns on His head. "Hail, King of the Jews," they mocked, as they beat Him and spit on Him. Then they killed Him.

The man called Jesus was a

different kind of king. He wasn't there to gain power, money, or influence. He wasn't there to take it easy and have other people serve Him. He came to save people from their sins. When He died on the cross, that's what He did - He paid the penalty for our sins so that we could be forgiven and have a close relationship with God, just like at the beginning when God made the world. And when God raised Him from the dead three days later, He defeated death, so that we could have life with Him forever. ■

## **The Servant-King**

We've all known people who use power for their own advantage. But Jesus is a different kind of authority figure. He gave up the glory of Heaven to live among people and suffer everything that people suffer. He allowed Himself to be put to death. When He was hanging on the cross, He refused to ask God to rescue Him, because He knew it was the only way to rescue us.

It doesn't matter what you've done or what's been done to you. Jesus the King gave up all the perks of His position to die for you, to forgive you, to put meaning and purpose back into your life, and to bring you back into His family.

God won't force you, but He invites you to accept His free offer of forgiveness. You can do that with a simple prayer from your heart, like this one:

God, I've been trying to live life my way, but it's not working. I'm sorry for the ways I've messed up, and I want to do things Your way. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for me. I accept Your free offer of salvation. Help me to know You better and live for You from now on.

Following God is about much more than a prayer you say one time. It's something you do every day. It changes every part of your life as you come to understand God's plan for our hearts, our minds, and our lives. If you've decided that you want to know Jesus the Servant-King better, Inside Journal wants to help. Write to "A King Is Born," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. We'll connect you with a partner that provides a free correspondence Bible study and a Bible, if you don't already have access to one through your facility.



All England celebrated the birth of future king George Alexander Louis.

# Doing HIS Time: Meditations and Prayers for Men and Women in Prison

By James C. Vogelzang with Lynn Vanderzalm

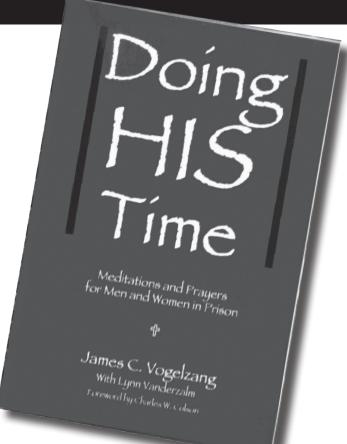
Foreword by Charles Colson

## "Doing HIS Time"

is a daily devotional written in your language, about your real-life situation, and it's available free of charge to inmates and chaplains.

To receive a FREE case of books
(English, Spanish, or both)
or your own individual copy of
"Doing HIS Time: Meditations and
Prayers for Men and Women in Prison"
please have the chaplain or
religious services director contact:

PO Box 91509
Santa Barbara, CA 93190



What are other inmates saying about this book?

"Man! This is the best devotional book I've read. It's in my language. I can totally understand it, and some of the pages, it seems like this author knows me, or had me in mind when he wrote them!" - *Codi* 

"Those of us behind bars wonder in despair about how we can put our lives back together. God will give us a meaningful life. This book shows how God will give us a meaningful life."

- Cynthia, incarcerated for 21 years

"I cannot tell you what a blessing this book is. Jim's insight into our desolate world behind bars is filled with the Holy Spirit." – Bill, serving life without parole

# From a Cell to the Supreme Court

by A. R. Quinn

- It's an unlikely story, to say the least.
Shon Hop-wood, 36, showed early athletic promise as a basketball player and earned a bachelor's degree from Bellevue University, a private college in his native Nebraska. In his early 20s, however, Shon gave into the allure of some easy money. Five separate times, he and his accomplices would walk into banks in rural Nebraska, wave guns, make

EATTLE, WASH.

No one was hurt during these robberies, but a federal judge sentenced Shon to 12 years in 1999.

threats, and run out with cash.

Behind the bars of a highsecurity federal prison, Shon struggled to adjust to prison politics, gang violence, and limitations on his freedom. But he won some respect due to his skills on the basketball court, and soon he was assigned to work in the law library. Shon didn't know anything about the law at the time, but that assignment was about to change his life forever. In 2000 Shon started working on legal writing and research. He found that he enjoyed the process, and he learned by practicing. In 2002 a friend, John Fellers, approached him and asked him to write a complicated "cert petition" for the U.S. Supreme Court. It was a challenging request, but Shon



For Shon, imprisonment sparked an interest in legal issues which launched him toward a career in law.

agreed and dove into the task wholeheartedly.

After Shon submitted the brief, John was transferred to another prison, and months passed in silence. Shon knew the petition was a long shot. According to an article in The New York Times, the Supreme Court got 7,209 petitions that year from inmates and others who could not afford the filing fee. The Court would hear just a few of those.

But one day, out of the blue, Shon got the news: the Court had granted his petition. Later, after an attorney argued the case, the Court ruled in John's favor, 9-0.

"I felt elated," Shon remembered during a recent phone interview with Inside Journal. "It was a long shot. I knew things would be different after that, and they were."

Shon began to dream about a new life after a prison as a paralegal, or even as a lawyer. In the meantime, news of his legal talents spread quickly among other inmates. He wrote many additional legal briefs on behalf of his fellow prisoners, helping them win victories in cases in federal courts all over the country, including another Supreme Court brief in 2005.

Shon was released to a halfway house in 2008, and was released from custody in 2009. He considers himself blessed to have gotten a paralegal job helping lawyers file briefs with the Supreme Court. It was what

he had dreamed of doing when he was working in the prison law library. But Shon's wife, Annie, and a lawyer who mentored him, encouraged him to broaden his horizons. They were right—even bigger things were in store.

The New York Times heard about Shon's unusual life story and wrote an article about him in February 2010. After reading the article, a law professor at the University of Washington encouraged him to apply for a scholarship to attend law school in Seattle.

Shon applied to law school and interviewed for the scholar-ship, which included tuition, books, and enough money to cover living expenses for him, his wife Annie, and their two young children. He was admitted to the program and also won the scholarship. Today he is a Gates Scholar at the University of Washington, and he plans to graduate in 2014.

In 2012 a publisher released "Law Man," a book about Shon's remarkable journey from a prison cell to the courtroom. "The reception has been nothing short of amazing," Shon marveled. "The book has been out over a year. I get emails from people weekly who have enjoyed it – especially from parents of teens and young adults who have gotten locked up, looking for any sort of hope to latch onto."

Shon has made some other big changes since being released. He's found a relationship with God, as well. "I grew up in a Christian home," he explained, "but I rebelled against God every chance I could get ... My mom was sending me Christian books in prison, but I wasn't ready to make the plunge."

Shon finally went over the edge and became a Christian before he got married to Annie. He knew that he needed God's helped to be the husband and father he hoped to be.

Looking back, Shon marvels at the grace he believes he has received in his life, even when he wasn't looking to acknowledge God or do the right thing.

"I have a lot to be thankful for," he said. "My story is one of grace over and over again, and a story of God pursuing me even when I wasn't pursuing Him."

And when asked what he would say to his friends still behind bars, Shon had some thoughtful words of wisdom, even though it's more life wisdom than legal advice.

First, he says, "without Jesus, nothing inside or out is going to matter." Second, he emphasized preparation for reentry. "Use your time productively! Think about your release throughout your sentence. The guys who spend all that time preparing to do better when they get out, are the ones who are less likely to return to prison."

Inside Journal and Prison Fellowship do not provide legal advice or assistance. Please do not write to Inside Journal asking for help with a legal case.

# FCC Caps Prisoner Phone Rates

by Sarah Chaffee

ow much should it cost to call home? Martha Wright paid \$1000 a year to talk to her imprisoned grandson, Ulandis Forte. For Forte, sentenced to 18 years for murder, conversations with his grandmother were a lifeline – but very expensive for her.

Forte told The Huffington Post that there had "been times when she [Wright] had to choose over paying for her medication to talk to me." Wright sued 10 years ago over the price of calls.

Wright isn't the only one facing high calling charges. In Georgia, a 15-minute out-of-state phone conversation can cost more than \$17, according to the state's prison phone user guide. Alabama, Arkansas, Ohio, and Minnesota also have high rates, the Congressional blog, The Hill, said.

In August 2013, on a 2-1 decision, the FCC decided to regulate interstate, long-dis-

tance calling charges. They will cap prices to \$0.25 per minute for collect calls, and to \$0.21 per minute for prepaid or debit card phone calls. The FCC's decision applies to all interstate calls made from local state and federal jails and prisons.

Research links conversations with family and friends to lower recidivism rates. Furthermore, the FCC believes that the estimated 2.7 million children of prisoners will benefit from lower calling prices.

"The calls were everything. It was what I looked forward to all of the time," Forte said to the Washington Informer.

The cost of making a call is high because of a commission-based telephone market.

Companies submit bids, often promising to return to the institution a percentage of the money earned from each call.

"The facilities would evaluate the bids, and what they were looking at what was the most attractive bid for them," Mignon Clyburn, acting chairperson of the FCC said. She also noted that some commissions reached 60 percent.

Richard Smith, CEO of telephone company Securus, believes that the FCC's regulations will lead to higher costs for local calls, according to *The* Huffington Post. The phone call industry has threatened to sue unless the FCC makes changes to the proposed rules. Also, Ajit Pai, the FCC commissioner who disagreed with the decision,

told McClatchy News he fears decreased phone service in prisons because companies will make less profit.

"What we've built for the corrections industry is very secure and it helps solve tens of thousands of crimes a year," Smith said. "It's a business for profit."

But New York bans kickbacks, and inmates there pay per-minute charges of just a few cents. The same company that serves Georgia prisons provides their service, and the Prison Policy Initiative believes that there will be few adverse effects from the FCC's policy.

For people like Wright, FCC's ruling promises better communication with family.

"It's about time," Wright said to the Washington Informer. "I had faith this would happen, and now it has."

According to its website, the FCC "seeks comment on reforming rates and practices affecting calls within a state." Hopefully, this change will be the first of many.



Talking to loved ones out of state is now much more affordable for inmates.



# PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS OUT TO SUMME 23, NO. 1 WINTER 2014

# **Back From the Brink**

### by Ron Humphrey

avid Hamm sadly reflects, "The invention of the TV dinner tray for eating in front of the television instead of at the dinner table began a downfall for my family."

David was 12 at the time, living in Garland, Texas. That was when he stopped attending Sunday school, church, and vacation Bible school, which he had previously loved.

"My dad worked 36 years for the post office and retired as postmaster. My mother was a stay-at-home mom, and my brother, a year older, was already getting into alcohol and drugs. My younger sister and I would soon follow." David was stealing beer at age 13 and consuming a six-pack every evening. Bragging about it at school was a bad idea, and the police arrested him on a misdemeanor charge of theft.

David didn't get the message and was soon smoking mari-

juana and moving into more serious drug use.

"If I could get high on it, I was taking it or smoking it," he remembers. David recalls one time when, after taking two hits of LSD at a Styx concert, he lost touch with reality for two weeks. One step ahead of the law after a botched armed robbery, David thought he could straighten himself out in the military, so he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force.

But nothing went as David planned. He became a serious alcoholic and continued his use of drugs. The military, however, never caught on to his substance abuse, and he completed his four-year hitch with an honorable discharge and a Good Conduct Medal.

Two years later, the roof caved in when David's brother, his role model, committed suicide.

"I loved my brother, and his death broke my heart," David says. Unable to deal with his brother's death, David launched himself into even deeper use of drugs, living in a fog for months.



David Hamm enlisted in the U.S. Air Force to try to outrun his drug addiction.

Continued on page 2

# Former Parolee Advises Others

## by Sarah Chaffee

A Q&A with Clark Porter

childhood was rocky. As a teenager, he took to the streets.

After robbing a post office at gunpoint, he received a 35-year sentence. He served 15 years, mostly in 22-hour-a-day

lark Porter's

supermax lockdown.
Clark turned to Christ to change his life, and when he was released, he had a plan to make it in the free world.

"When I left prison, my mindset was not to go back," he says. "I worked on three areas: faith – becoming a part of a church, therapy for four years, and getting a job/becoming independent. Once I was settled and got my own apartment, I started focusing on school."

At community college, Clark's creative writing caught the attention of a professor, who showed his work to a dean at Washington University in St. Louis. Clark received a scholarship and graduated with honors in 2006. He went on to complete a master's program in social work. Afterward, he gave his résumé to Doug Burris, head of the federal probation office in St. Louis, for assistance in the job search.

"[Doug] had me come by the office and said, 'Why don't you work here?' I said 'OK,'" Clark recalls.

"[Clark] was sworn in by the chief judge in the district courtroom, which means he stood there twice – once to get a 35-year sentence; the other time to accept a job," Doug said to the St. Louis Beacon.

Clark now serves in three areas: providing resources for inmates during the pre-release stage, conducting cognitive behavior groups, and helping to administer Program Re-Direct, which serves ex-prisoners at high risk of returning to prison. Clark presented about Program Re-Direct at a national probation officer conference.

Recently Clark got on the phone with IJ to give insight to our readers who might be anticipating their own release date.

# IJ: What is important knowledge for someone just released?

Clark: Once someone is out, my first objective is to work on three areas: employment, training, and college. They need to overcome obstacles in the way of these three things.

You aren't going to get anything without education. You're not competitive unless you are a qualified employee. Recently-released people often think, I'm going to get a job and all is well. You minimize disadvantages by getting



In 1986, 17-year-old Clark
Porter assisted in an armed
robbery. But today, this exprisoner is a program support
specialist at the St. Louis
Federal Probation Office.

education. An employer can look at an ex-con and say: He doesn't have any education; he doesn't have any job skills. He's not a qualified employee ... Get yourself into training, get 'paper' so that you are

certified ...

Training is important, education is important because we don't want them to just have a job at McDonald's. We want them to get a job with medical and dental benefits, to get them into careers. We want to get them educated and send them back to college.

# IJ: What advice would you give to prisoners preparing for reentry?

Clark: Be willing to invest. As much time as you spent in prison, invest that time to grow. If you spent five years in prison, spend five years trying to get your life on track. What do you want your life to look like? You've got to invest in those visions. You can't come out of prison looking for immediate gratification.

Take advantage of training programs, even if you think they are inferior. Keep yourself occupied and focused on learning ...

Continued on page 2

### **Letter From the Editor**

#### **Dealing With Grief**

I'll never forget when my mom called me to say that my dad had just died. It was like someone had thrown a bucket of ice water over my head. It was just the first step in a long journey of grief.

When someone you love dies, there are so many emotions to face: shock, sadness, anger, loneliness, and perhaps feelings of guilt or regret about the relationship you had with that person. The grieving process can be even more complicated and intense when you are away behind bars - unable to say goodbye, attend the funeral, or receive comfort from your friends and family. Many prisoners say their greatest fear is that someone they love will die before they can get out and



go home.

How can you cope if this happens to you?

It can help to understand that grieving is a journey everyone must go through.

According to "On Death and Dying," a popular 1969 book by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, grief has several stages, including: denial ("Maybe there's been a mistake ..."), bargaining ("If only I had

been there, maybe things would have happened differently."), anger ("This isn't fair!"), depression ("I don't see how I can ever feel happy again."), and finally, acceptance ("I will always miss this person, but I am able to move on.")

Grieving takes a lot of time, and it can be different for everyone. But – especially with help – you can get through it and come out the other side.

Grief can also bring us unexpected gifts. It can help us not to take things for granted, and instead appreciate the beauty and joy of even the smallest things. It can help us think carefully about how brief and fragile life is, and how we can spend our days on things that will matter after our lives in this world are over.

Have you experienced the loss of a loved one while incarcerated? What helped you cope? What's your advice for others? Write to us at: Letters to the Editor, Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20176.

Sincerely,

A93:-

A.R. Quinn Editor

#### Parolee Advice Continued from page 1

Get your GED and take all the education programs, because you don't know what you're going to need once you're out. I didn't know that my writing was going to help me. I invested a lot of time in writing while I was in prison. And I didn't know that my GED would help me to get into community college.

## IJ: How should an ex-prisoner go about repairing relationships with family?

Clark: Sometimes you have to limit your relationships ... Your family had the problems they had before you came out of prison. All of those problems were there the whole time you were in prison. Focus on getting you together.

### IJ: How does one form a strong relationship with their probation/parole officer?

Clark: You have got to make the relationship collaborative, or you're going to lose out. You've got to treat them well. Keep them out of your face. Follow the standard conditions of parole/probation ...

Probation officers and social workers can connect you to the community, and help you to find resources to address some of your needs. Utilize your resources; don't see these people as your adversaries ... You don't

know what opportunities in the community they can offer you if you open yourself up to them.

## IJ: How can parolees focus on long-term goals instead of mere survival?

Clark: Strike a balance between a survival mentality and going for goals. You have to keep many balls in the air. You have to keep pushing toward a future for yourself ... Don't focus on the fact that you don't have employment. Focus on establishing yourself in the community. Don't become myopic about doing one or two things. You have a host of things you have to get accomplished, including fulfilling the conditions of parole. Create structure within your life.

#### *IJ:* How important is community in reintegration?

Clark: ... [S]tick to what kept you together when you were in prison. Keep that community in place. For those who are Christians, I strongly recommend keeping that community in place through a church. Community means I'm accountable to someone. I'm accountable to my higher power, and persons I value and hold dear. It may take six months or a year for you to find a home church. Once you've found a church, stick with it ... You're not going to be satisfied all the time, but you are building and growing with that church.

#### **Subscription Info**

At Inside Journal® (IJ), we receive many letters each week from inmates asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers. However, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is *only* available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

#### **Back From the Brink**

Continued from page 1

David's dad blamed himself for his son's death and started drinking heavily. He became bitter. Forty years later, he would try to kill himself the same way his son had.

#### Finding Christ Through Meadowlark

Everything would change for David on Christmas Eve, 1984. By chance, he tuned his TV to a religious channel hosted by Harlem Globetrotter basketball star Meadowlark Lemon.

David notes, "On that program, I saw such joy on everyone's face. I called in and accepted Jesus over the phone while talking with a prayer partner."

David's life began to change through the power of Jesus Christ. Gone were the drugs and alcohol. David returned to church and went "full-speed ahead" with Jesus. He started

> "I loved my brother, and his death broke my heart."



David's dependence on speed led to his first serious prison time. With mentoring, accountability, and faith, he's been clean and sober for nine years.

a Bible fellowship in his home. Next, he began street witnessing and ministry to prisoners. He became a missionary, traveling through the United States, Mexico, and Chile. "We did child evangelism, dramas, street ministry, door-to-door evangelism, as well as visiting with prisoners."

After several years as a street missionary, David decided he needed more education. He began attending classes at DeVry University while holding down a job to pay his tuition and living costs. The stress was too much, and David tried some meth to keep up the pace. But David's drug addiction had been one step behind him, and now it came roaring back. Soon, he was shooting heroin.

Still, David stuck to his classes and graduated magna cum laude with a 3.84 grade point average and a bachelor's degree in computer information systems. That led to a job with a major company, and the money rolled in. But so did the cops, eventually, nabbing David on possession of speed. He was sentenced to five years of supervised probation. While on probation, he gained a master's degree in information systems management.

But that changed to two years of prison time when David violated his probation. For the first time in his life, David found himself behind some serious prison bars, at the Estes Unit in Venus, Texas.

#### **A Second Chance**

David had finally hit rock bottom, going from underage drinking and smoking pot to a hard-core prison inmate. But God hadn't given up on him. David enrolled in the faith-based unit at Estes. There, he was surrounded by eager, enthusiastic inmates living out a Christian life behind bars while they prepared themselves for a productive future back in society.

"I was into Christ 24/7," says David. "I attended church services, Bible studies, classes, and seminars offered by various ministries." Paroled in 2011, David began an outside mentoring relationship with Dave Baer, Prison Fellowship's Dallas director.

David now has a job and works with several prison ministries in Texas, including Prison Fellowship. He offers this advice to prisoners: "If you are serious about making a new start in life, begin making attitude changes while still in prison. When you are out, find a loving, caring church to attend. Don't hide your past, but explain where you have been in your walk with the Lord and your need for a good mentor to help."

"I am also giving back through my work in prison ministry. The support of my family has been extremely important. Put this all together, and you have a plan for success."

It has been two years since David's release from prison. "I am nine years clean and sober," he says. "I can attribute it to attending church, Bible study, and most definitely to accountability and mentorship. God is what my life is all about today. I am so thankful. What God did for me, He can do for you. Prison is not the time to give up." ■

# PRAYER WARRIORS CORNER



"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

Proverbs 9:10

#### Pray with and for one another:

- For wisdom to make all the daily decisions of life with a biblical worldview
- For wisdom that yields patience; it is to your glory to overlook an offense
- For wisdom to have the right motives in your actions

# Feeling All Tied Up?

by Zach Sewell

friend of mine recently used an illustration to explain how difficult it can be for people who have been released from prison. He asked me to stand

in the middle of a group and hold a ball of yarn. I was supposed to represent an ex-prisoner. He asked those standing in the circle to ity, family stress, the struggle to find employment ... When all of these challenges stack up, they're overwhelming.

Freedom for ex-prisoners is not the same as freedom for most people. Freedom is an obstacle course for ex-prisoners, with a high rate of failure. This is not a new reality. The world has always been hard on former inmates. Thousands of years ago, God broke the chains of imprison-



mention challenges ex-prisoners face. When the first person spoke up, I held the end of the yarn and gave the roll to them. They held onto the yarn and tossed the ball to the next person, who named a different challenge.

By the time they were done, I was all wrapped up. I felt suffocated by all the pressures they brought up: housing, parole fees, paying for an ankle bracelet, child support payments, medication costs, temptation, addictions, judgment, relationship issues, instabilment and slavery for a group of Israelites who had been confined in Egypt. They had endured what the Bible describes as "ruthless" treatment from the Egyptians (Exodus 1:13-14).

The Israelites faced beatings, unreasonable demands, and constant verbal abuse. Worst of all, they lost their infant boys to murder because the Egyptians felt threatened by their increasing population. The boys were sentenced to death as soon as they were born. The Egyptians took

them from their parents and threw them into the river.

God sent Moses, a survivor of the infant genocide who had escaped Egypt as an adult, to demand the release of the Israelites. When the leaders of Egypt didn't listen to Moses, God sent devastating plagues on the Egyptians until their top official could no longer take it and told Moses to gather the prisoners and leave.

But freedom wasn't a walk in the park. The newly freed group was vulnerable in many ways. Shelter was an ongoing challenge. For years, they were on the move and didn't have a stable housing situation. There were also concerns about food, and people started to compare their food to the filling meals they had while they were enslaved (Exodus 16:3). There was also a threat of violence (Numbers 14:3-4). The men were afraid that other groups would kill them and take their wives and children as prize.

The group's morale sank. Just as many ex-prisoners struggle in the days after release, the former slaves began to grumble and resent the uncertainties of freedom in the wilderness. Perhaps the most discouraging point for Moses came when he heard someone say: "Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" (Numbers 14:3)

The pressures of living free were so overwhelming that they wanted to go back. They were willing to sacrifice liberty and freedom for familiarity and certainty. They were willing to return to hard labor, abuse, ridicule, chains, lashings, and long hours in the heat.

Does this sound familiar? Has the difficulty of trying to stay on the right track convinced you to give up? Have you or a friend ever been released from prison – only to catch yourself wondering if there's something you could do to get back behind bars, the only place that feels safe and familiar to you now?

Captivity (whether it's physical captivity or captivity to a particular sin) might feel safer than freedom sometimes, but God made you for freedom, with all of its responsibilities and uncertainties. In fact, God loves it when a prisoner is set free. This is best illustrated in Psalm 107:10-16, a word-painting that describes God breaking apart shackles and prison bars for people who did wrong and then turned

to God. The Bible describes His own Son as being on a mission to "proclaim freedom for the prisoners" (Luke 4:18). When someone is freed from any kind of bondage, God wants them to stay free.

God did immeasurably more for the Israelites than they could have hoped – even though things looked bad for a while. They didn't go back to the prison of Egypt. They found the courage to focus on God and persevere. God showed them the path to a new home where they could start afresh. He can do the same for you. ■

Zach Sewell is the author of "Prisoners in the Bible."

#### **Out of Egypt**

There are many kinds of captivity. Your body can be held behind bars and walls, your mind can be held in shackles of ignorance, and your spirit can be a prisoner of darkness.

True freedom – open to all people – is found in knowing Jesus Christ, accepting God's forgiveness for your sins, and living life the way He meant it to be lived since the beginning: in a whole, healthy, loving relationship with Him, with others, with the world, and with yourself.

You can find true freedom right now. It doesn't matter who you are, where you are, or what you've done. You can leave your "Egypt" behind forever. A prayer like this may be a great start:

Dear God, I've been a prisoner in more ways than one. I want to be free from my sin. I give my life to You and I accept Your forgiveness. Help me to walk in true freedom and never look back. Amen.

Learning to let God free you is a lifelong process that begins again each day.

If you've decided that you want to learn more about what it means to let God set you free, Inside Journal wants to help. Write to "Out of Egypt," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. We'll connect you with a partner that provides a free correspondence Bible study and a Bible, if you don't already have access to one through your facility.

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## **These Prisoners Are All Business**

by A. R. Quinn

HARLOTTES-VILLE, VA. – It all started with a letter. A few years

A few years ago, a prisoner at Pocahontas State Correctional Center sent a carefully typed message to the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia (UVA) in Charlottesville, asking what the famous university could do to help him find employment.

The answer? Nothing.

But Robert F. Bruner, the dean of the business school, gave the letter to Gregory Fairchild, a UVA professor who was ranked as one of the Top Ten Business School Professors in the World by CNN/Fortune in 2012. Bruner asked Fairchild about the possibility of preparing a business curriculum for inmates.

The idea intrigued Fairchild, who has always believed in the importance of reaching out to prisoners.

"Matthew 25 is pretty clear," Fairchild, who grew up attending church, said in an interview. "When we go to the prisoner, Jesus says that we are going to Him. So that was always a part of my perspective. I always knew that was important."

Before long, Fairchild met with leaders in Richmond, Va., to obtain approval for a pilot entrepreneurship training program at Dillwyn Correctional Center in Virginia's Buckingham County.

Commitment to Learning

The pilot program, which



The renowned Darden Business School at the University of Virginia has thrown its weight behind an innovative entrepreneurship course for prisoners.

began in April 2012, brings together groups of dedicated inmate students at Dillwyn, a men's prison, and Fluvanna, a women's prison. Three times a week, students participate in courses facilitated by UVA business school professors and graduate students, who teach using the Socratic method. The Socratic method emphasizes questions and answers instead of lecturing, so that students have an opportunity to share their own real-life experiences and knowledge.

Fairchild and his wife, Tierney, an education expert who helps facilitate the classes at Fluvanna, have been impressed by the dedication of their students. Fairchild recalls how students made their own version of an

Excel spreadsheet, carefully calculating figures by hand. Tierney was struck by the ingenuity of a woman who went from cell to cell, asking other inmates about what foods they liked and what they would be willing to pay for them, so that she could know what prices to charge for meals at a restaurant she wants to open one day.

Inmates who successfully complete all of their classwork and math testing, write a business plan, and pass a final exam are eligible for an entrepreneurship certificate from the prestigious business school. The Fairchilds hope this will make it easier for ex-prisoners to find jobs or start their own businesses instead of returning to prison.

One of those inmates is Kirk

Smith, a Virginia man now wrapping up a 20-year sentence, who was interviewed by the Darden Report for an article in 2012.

"I'm still scared," said Smith, who plans to use his new entrepreneurial skills to start a custom painting business. "At times, I was pulling my hair out. But now I have more confidence. Now I believe I can start this business. I know I would have failed miserably without this class."

Even though the extra hours are sometimes long, the Fair-childs continue the program because they believe the entrepreneurship program can help ex-prisoners gain the confidence and skills they need to succeed.

"I believe people can change," Fairchild told the Darden Report. "I believe educational institutions can make a big difference. This is a world-class university and a world-class business school, and developing leaders to improve society is our stock-in-trade. We usually get the most prepared, the most advantaged students. I believe we can use our skills to teach the least prepared and the least advantaged. I believe this is possible."

#### **A Growing Movement**

The Fairchilds are not the first to believe that real-world entrepreneurial skills can help ex-prisoners compete in the job market. Before launching the program, Gregory traveled to Texas to study its Prison Entrepreneurship Program (PEP), a nonprofit organization founded by a former Wall Street professional. PEP's teaching model is based on the belief that inmates have hidden potential, and with business savvy shared by experts, they can craft plans for successful new ventures. Over the last decade, PEP graduates have enjoyed some of the best rehabilitation rates in the country. The vast majority never return to prison.

It's still too early to tell whether, like PEP, the Darden program will helps its graduates pass the ultimate test by succeeding when they re-enter the community. But the Fairchilds are optimistic. They trust that employers will see what they have grown to see in their students: that they belong in a suit and tie instead of a prison jumpsuit.

# **Movement on Sentencing Reform**

#### by Sarah Chaffee

rescription pain-killers eased John Horner's suffering after he lost an eye. When a friend wanted medication, Horner sold him four bottles he hadn't used. But his friend turned informant. Not long after, Horner was arrested and sentenced under federal mandatory minimums for drug dealing. This father of three faced 25 years of prison time.

"Mandatory minimum sentencing has done little to address the very real problem of drug abuse while also doing great damage by destroying so many lives," Senator Rand Paul (R-Kentucky) said to the Senate Judiciary Committee. His written testimony shared Horner's story.

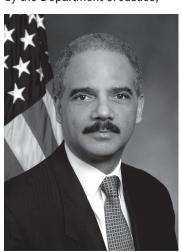
In 2013, Paul and U.S.
Attorney General Eric Holder proposed revisions to federal charging policies on mandatory minimum sentencing and expanded the criteria for compas-

sionate release.

#### Flexibility on Mandatory Minimums

"Too many Americans go to too many prisons for far too long, and for no truly good law enforcement reason," Holder said to the American Bar Association in August, announcing changes in federal charging policy.

In the reforms introduced by the Department of Justice,



Attorney General Eric Holder

"certain low-level, nonviolent drug offenders who have no ties to large-scale organizations, gangs, or cartels will no longer be charged with offenses that impose draconian mandatory minimum sentences,"

This change is somewhat retroactive.

"[T]he department has issued new guidance to apply our updated charging policy not only to new matters," Holder said on September 19, "but also to pending cases where the defendant was charged before the policy was issued but is still awaiting adjudication of guilt."

While most agree with relaxing mandatory minimums, not all support Holder's change. Congress – not the Department of Justice – should initiate reform, argued former Attorney General Michael Mukasey.

"The way to do that [get rid of mandatory minimums] is to pass a law, not to simply say you're going to disregard the law," he explained to CNN.

Mukasey may get his wish if Congress passes Paul's and Senator Patrick Leahy's (D-Vermont) Justice Safety Valve Act of 2013. This legislation would allow judges to sentence below mandatory minimums in all federal crimes, not just drugrelated offenses.

#### **Compassionate Release Eligibility Broadened**

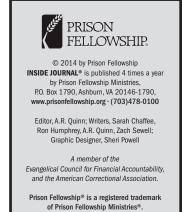
At the August meeting, Holder also announced "revised criteria for elderly inmates who did not commit violent crimes and who have served significant portions of their sentences."

According to the White House website, a federal inmate may apply for a reduction in their sentence if they face:

- medical situations (terminal and non-terminal),
- · situations where the caregiver for their child dies,
- situations where their spouse suffers serious medical/mental impairment,

· aging (certain circumstances).
Normally, federal prisoners
re-offend at a rate of 41 percent.
But according to a Bureau of
Prisons study, the three-year
rate of recidivism under compassionate release reaches only
3.5 percent.

For some, the Department of Justice's changes to compassionate-release and mandatory-minimum sentencing may ultimately mean shorter prison terms and more time with family – something John Horner would have enjoyed.



### EN ESPAÑOL **EL PERIÓDICO DE PRISON FELLOWSHIP** VOLUMEN 2, NO. 1 **INVIERNO 2014**

# **Un Soldado Para Cristo**

#### **Por Carolyn Kincaid**

e joven, Epifanio "Pefee" Arzapalo creía que sabía lo que quería de la vida, y como obtenerlo. Pefee nos dice que en Grand Junction, Colorado, la ciudad en que nació y creció, su estilo de vida era una combinación de alcoholismo, robos, mentiras, e intimidación. Solía asustar a otras personas a hacer su voluntad por medio de amenazas de lástima física.

Pero Pefee podía ver adonde eventualmente lo llevaría este estilo de vida. Sus dichos amigos habían todos terminado en la cárcel o simplemente sentados en casa, esperando las estampillas para comida.

Él no quería que esa fuera su vida. En octubre del 1975 se encontró de frente con un cartelón muy brillante y con un hombre barbón de sombrero alto y un dedo señalando. El cartelón decía, "El Tío Sam

Te Solicita."

Aquel anuncio le jaló una cuerda a Pefee por mucho tiempo. Él ya había estado esperando una oportunidad para darle algún tipo de estructura o disciplina a su vida, y cambiarla. Así que firmó su futuro al servicio militar y se fue al entrenamiento. No les avisó ni a su esposa mucho menos a sus pequeños hijos adonde se iría.

#### La Mentira de un Soldado

Las fuerzas armadas sí le dieron algo de estructura a Pefee, pero no cambió mucho por adentro.

"Me llevé todos mis malos hábitos conmigo. La gastadera de dinero, lo borracho, y el adulterio. Era un desastre total, y volví a enredar a mi esposa e hijos en el desastre que creía haber dejado atrás en Grand Junction," dice Pefee. "Por más de 16 años, me la pasé de un base de las fuerzas armadas a otra, viviendo la vida como si no tuviera familia. Yo no con-

ocía a Dios. Yo mismo escogí no conocerLo, y admito que en lugar de acercar a mi familia, a ellos me alejaba cada día más."

Para el 1990 Pefee ya había servido y sobrevivido en la Operación "Desert Storm" en Iraq, como el líder de un escuadrón de armas biológicas y químicas. Él presenció cosas terribles en la guerra que se quedaron en su mente. Se llevó a casas heridas muy profundas, en forma de cadera lastimada y un severo desorden psicologíco resultando de estrés traumático. Regresó a los Estados Unidos un hombre dañado por sus experiencias en la guerra, y buscó refugio en el fondo de una botella de alcohol.

#### Las Puertas Se Abren a una Nueva Vida

Algunos años más tarde, Pefee estaba sentado en una celda después de una borrachera, sabiendo que estaba enfrentando una larga sentencia en prisión por intento de asesinato. Susurró, "Señor, si

Continúa en la pág. 2



Pefee Arzapalo sobrevivió la guerra, pero necesitaba ayuda para enfrentar su alcoholismo.

# El Enojo: ¿Aliado o Enemigo?

#### **Por Kay Camenisch**

n ex-recluso

dijo que el enojo era la única emoción aceptable cuando estaba encarcelado. Hay muchas razones para sentirse enojado detrás de rejas: la pérdida de libertad, problemas con otros reclusos, y el descuido por dichos amigos y seres queridos. A veces, parece que si no muestras agresión, serás atropellado. Nunca te atrevas a bajar la guardia y mostrar sus partes vulnerables. En prisión, el enojo puede parecer la mejor defensa, un aliado en una guerra peligrosa.

Por lo contrario, lo que dice la Biblia sobre el enojo parece extraño. Efesios 4:31 dice, "Sea quitada de vosotros toda amargura, enojo, ira, gritos, maledicencia, así como toda malicia." ¿Quitar

la ira? ¿Por qué no mantener una fachada de dureza en un ambiente tan duro como la prisión?

Evidentemente Dios sabía que nosotros preguntaríamos. Nos da la respuesta en Santiago 1:20. Dice, "La ira del nombre no obra la justicia de Dios." La justicia de Dios quiere decir estar en relaciones buenas y saludables con Dios y sus vecinos. Relaciones rectas reforzan a los demás y los hacen mejores personas.

En vez de reforzar a otras personas, la ira las destroza. Destruye relaciones. Quizás el enojo te ayuda a obtener lo que quieres inmediatamente, pero deja un camino de destrucción. Si queremos paz y amistad, necesitamos reforzar a individuos e relaciones.

#### **Responder Sin Ira**

Entonces, ¿cómo podemos responder cuando alguien nos amenaza o hace daño?

Jescucristo dijo, "Pero yo os digo: no resistáis al que es malo; antes bien, a cualquiera que te abofetee en la mejilla

derecha, vuélvele también la otra" (Mateo 5:39). ¿Te parece una receta para el desastre? Antes de que te imaginas

lo que podría pasar si tú le volvieras la otra mejilla a tu enemigo, considera a David. David vivía en los tiempos de

### **Cuando Pasan Cosas Malas**

Todos nosotros hemos conocido a gente que parecen esuchar a Dios y obedecerlo, pero, no obstante, le pasan cosas terribles. ¿Por qué? ¿Dónde está Dios en estos momentos de tribulación?

Un mirada a la vida de José - cuyo historia está escrita en el libro de Génesis - muestra como podemos confiar en Dios, aunque no comprendemos por qué haya permitido que pasen cosas malas.

Los celosos hermanos mayores de José lo vendieron como esclavo. Cuando llegó a Egipto, José sirvió fielmente a su maestro, pero se le acusó de un crimen que no había cometido. José se encontró detrás de rejas por años. José no entendía lo que Dios estaba haciendo, pero escogió vivir rectamente cada día, y Dios lo cuidó. Unos años más tarde, Dios hizo que José fuera uno de los hombres más poderosos del Egipto. Cuando hubo una hambruna en toda la región, José pudo salvar a su familia.

Después de muchos años de adversidad, José finalmente vio a sus hermanos cuando vinieron para pedirle comida. Sus hermanos tenían miedo de José, pero él les dijo que no teman, que Dios lo habia enviado a Egipto para salvar vidas. Dijo, "Vosotros pensasteis hacerme mal, pero Dios lo tornó en bien" (Genesio 50:20).

De la misma manera, Dios puede usar tus circunstancias dificiles para un gran propósito si pones tu confianza en Él - aunque cuando parece que sus promesas de protección y ayuda no se realizan inmediatamente.

Continúa en la pág. 2

# **Cartas al Editor**

#### 'Sabotaje en la Sala de Visitas'

Soy cubano. Tengo 44 años y me encuentro preso hace un año y medio. Soy de Miami, y es la primerva vez quo cumplo sentencia ... Hace unos meses tome la determinación de entregarle mi corazón a nuestro Señor Jesus y les puedo decire que mi vida ha dado un giro de 180 grados. Visitando la iglesia hoy como todos los miércoles, tome del mural varios libritos y entre ellos su edición, y les puedo comentar que me ha gustado mucho ya que la encuentro muy instructiva y como a mi, espero que les haya gustado a mis demás compañeros, creo que la sección de sabotaie en la sala de visitas. Le haga tomar conciencia a muchos presos puesto que es una realidad que no todos sabemos mantener una buena comunicación en las visitas, y en ocasiones convertimos



la visita en algo agobiante e insoportable.

- L.S., Florida

#### 'Estar sin Comunicación'

Soy mexicano. He estado detrás de rejas por unos tres anos, y no tengo a nadie aqui – por lo menos no en este país. Afortunadamente no me siento solo por que sé que no estoy. Sé que tengo el Señor Jesucristo conmigo. Por las

manos de un amigo recibí una copia de Inside Journal, una luz para mi. He sido un recluso, escondiendome en mi soledad y nunca hablando ... He dejado de decir mis oraciones cada noche, y no participo en el programa de iglesia, o, por lo menos, no voy a servicios. La verdad es que es un poco dificil estar sin comunicación, y no tener ningún contacto humano, ni nadie con quien platicar ... Bueno, ahora me despido, pero no sin primero decir una oración por toda la gente que se esfuerzan para hacer este periódico, y también voy a orar por las madres e hijos de reclusos, y para los que están en prisión, que Dios nos dé Su consuelo, y que nos bendiga.

- A., Kansas

¿Qué piensas tú? Escribe al Director Editorial, Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790.

#### **Enojo** Viene de la pág. 1

la Biblia. Trataba obedecer a Dios y al rey de la nación, Saul. Pero Saul estaba celoso, y trató de matarlo a David. El ejército lo persiguió, pero David creía que Dios era su escudo. Tomó refugio en Dios, y Dios lo protegió.

El Señor quiere ser nuestro escudo y salvador, tambien. No tenemos que enojarnos para defendernos. Jesucristo nos ha prometido: "Nunca te dejaré ni te desampararé" (Hebreos 13:5). No importa la situación que enfrentamos; Dios es capaz de protegernos y salvarnos cuando buscamos refugio en Él.

Recientamente supe de un ex-preso – lo llamamos Pedro – quien estaba en un restaurante donde trabajaba, limpiando después de servir almuerzo a varios clientes. Tres horas antes de la cena, entraron cuatro matones. Se separaron y empezaron a mover hacia Pedro, amenazándolo. Pedro calculó que podría vencer a tres de ellos. Por instinto agarró el cuello de una botella en una mesa cercana. Estaba listo.

Pero un pensamiento pasó

por su mente: "¿Quieres ser como solía ser?" Pedro dejó de moverse. Le gustaba la libertad que había encontrado desde entregar su vida a Cristo. No quería volver a su viejo estilo de vida.

Lentamente devolvió la botella a la mesa y recobró su aliento. Mirando. Esperando.

La puerta abrió. Una pareja entró y se sentaron en una mesa. La puerta abrió de nuevo, y entraron más personas.

Al ver a la gente, los alborotadores dieron una vuelta y se fueron. Pedro quedó con boca abierta, asombrado. Había esperado, y Dios lo había defendido.

Todos nosotros tenemos que escoger: ¿Queremos seguir con nuestro viejo estilo de vida? ¿O, como David y Pedro, estamos dispuestos a bajar nuestras armas y confiar en Dios par ser nuestra defensa?

Cuando te sientes amenazado, o tentado a enojarte, deténte y pregúntate:

- Si me enojo, ¿será mejor mi vida, or me mantendré en el viejo estilo de vida?
- ¿Quién puede protegerme mejor? ¿Yo mismo? ¿O
   Dios, quien me ha hecho y ha prometido ser mi escudo?

#### Un Soldado

Viene de la pág. 1

Tú me sacas de esta situación, yo le haré saber a todos que fuiste Tú que me sacaste; iré a la iglesia y leeré Tu Biblia."

Una voz interrumpió la valentía de Pefee y le dijo, "Irás a prisión, pero no irás solo."

"Me llevé
todos mis
malos hábitos
conmigo. La
gastadera
de dinero, lo
borracho, y el
adulterio. Era
un desastre
total ..."

Pefee recuerda esas palábras exactas con lágrimas en sus ojos. Él dice que ese día tomó la determinación de aceptar a Jesucristo como su Salvador.

Pefee fue encarcelado por unos años en Nebraska, donde pasaba su tiempo leyendo cuidadosamente la Palabra de Dios, por muchas horas y diariamente. Después supo sobre un programa basado en la fe, un programa que transforma las vidas de internos en Four Mile Correctional Facility en Colorado. Aplicó para ser transferido a ese programa y esperó para ver si lo aceptaran.

El primero de abril, el capellán de Four Mile Correctional Facility contactó a Pefee y le comunicó que había sido aceptado en el programa.

"Yo creía que era una broma, por ser el Día de los Inocentes," dice Pefee, riéndose.

Pefee entró en el programa. Un nuevo capítulo en su vida comenzó el día en que Pefee conoció a su nuevo mentor, un voluntario por nombre de Ron. Como Pefee, Ron también era un veterano de guerra. El había servido en Vietnam. Después de su retorno a los Estados Unidos, Ron perdió sus dos piernas en un accidente aereo, pero ni el accidente en el helicóptero detuvo a Ron de ayudar a los que se encuentran detrás de las rejas.

"Pefee estaba caminando un camino difícil," dice Ron. "Por medio de oración, estudios bíblicos, y recordatorios de estar en guardia contra la tentación, yo traté de hacer que el fuera un ciudadano productivo y que caminara una vida cristiana."

Y Pefee se llevó hasta el corazón los consejos que Ron le había dado.

Por seis meses Ron visitaba fielmente a Pefee, quien fue liberado de la prisión en octubre del 2011. A pesar de que algunas personas son esképticas de la que se llama "fe de conveniencia," los cambios en su vida parecen ser permanentes, porque empezaron por adentro. Pefee comenzó ad



Pefee ora con Ron, su mentor.

asistir a la iglesia con Ron y su esposa, Jan. La comunidad en la iglesia le dio estabilidad, un lugar para comenzar a establecer relaciones con sus nuevos vecinos.

Pefree sonríe y dice, "Siempre le estoy llamando capellán al pastor de la iglesia. Es tan difícil para mi poner la terminología correcta en su lugar."

Uno de los desafíos más grandes para Pefee era encontrar trabajo. Ha tenido tiempos de empleo y desempleo. Pero está haciendo todo lo posible para asegurarse que es un candidato competitivo para cualquier puesto. Antes de que fue liberado, jamás había usado una computadora. Actualmente va a la biblioteca para usar y aprender de la más última tecnología. Le recomienda a cada interno de prisión que utilice su tiempo libre positivamente, y se aproveche de todas las oportunidades disponibles para completar cursos de instituciones educativas acreditadas que lo da créditos transferibles.

Pefee también comenzó a establecer puentes con su familia. Él tiene 7 niños con 5 diferentes mujeres, de lo cual no se enorgullece, "pero eso es solo un hecho," dice él.

El comenzó contactándose con ellos, pidiéndoles perdón, por todo el desastre que les había causado en el pasado. Algunos ya lo perdonaron, mientras otros se encuentran todavía decidiendo que es lo que sienten or piensan del padre que en realidad nunca concían.

Pefee está de acuerdo con lo que el camino le depare y dice "Voy a dejar que el Señor mi Dios maneje." ■

2

# Una Vida Sin Dolor Es Agonía

**Por Steve Rempe** 

n artículo reciente cuenta la historia de Steven Pete.
Steven y su hermano nacieron con un raro desorden genético llamado analgesia congénita. Steven tiene sentido del tacto, pero no puede sentir dolor físico.

Quizás te sientes celoso a Steven. ¿A quién no le gustaría gozar de una vida libre de la pena? Sin dolor, no tendrías que temer la consecuencias de sus acciones, y no habría ningún obstáculo en su camino ... ¿verdad?

Como Steven declara en el artículo, una vida sin dolor no es ideal. En vez de gozar de la vida, Steven pasa cada día con el miedo de hacerse mucho daño sin darse cuenta del hecho. Recuerda que cuando era joven, se rompió la pierna en una fiesta de patinaje sobre ruedas, pero no se dio cuenta hasta que vio a varias personas apuntando a su pantalón manchado con su sangre. Pasó la mayoría de su niñez en casa o en un hospital, recuperando después de heridas que jamás se sintió.

Actualmente, como adulto, Steve tiene que tener mucho cuidado cuando elige sus activdades físicos, y siempre tiene miedo de que tendrá una herida o maldad interna, como apendicitis, que no será diagnosticado hasta que sea demasiado tarde. (Lástimadamente, su hermano se suicidió más que seguir viviendo que todas las complicaciones de su condición.)

Seguro que el dolor es incómodo, pero sirve un propósito muy importante. El dolor nos dice que algo anda mal. Nos dice que estamos haciendo algo peligroso o insaludable, y si no hacemos algo para resolver la situación, resultarán consecuencias aún peores. El dolor es el sistema de alerta para nuestros cuerpos, y cuando lo ignoramos, corremos un riesgo



muy grave.

Si pateas un muro de piedra, las leyes de la física explican claramente lo que va a pasar. El muro es más fuerte que tu pie, y puedes contar con sentir mucho dolor cuando lo pateas. Una cosa semejante pasa cuando trasgredes las leyes de Dios (el término técnico para una violación de las leyes de Dios es "pecado.") Cuando trasgrede las leyes espirituales, las consecuencias son predecibles: puedes contar con dolor en tu vida. Dios usa las consecuencias dolorosas de nuestros pecados para avisarnos, como si agitara una bandera roja diciéndonos, "¡Atención! ¡Estás en peligro!" Dios también puede usar el dolor para digirnos a si mismo. Cuando no sentimos aislados y tristres, nuestro dolor nos puede animar a buscar a Dios, quien la Bible nos dice es un "amigo más unido que un hermano" (Proverbios 18:24).

A veces, Dios permite que sientamos las consecuencias dolorosas de nuestro pecado para que sepamos cuando estamos errando. Y a veces experimentamos dolor simplemente porque vivimos en un mundo quebrado e imperfecto, y otras personas nos causan daño. La cosa más importante es que en cada situación, Dios puede usar el dolor en nuestras vidas para ayudarnos a quedarnos a su lado, obteniendo nuestra fuerza de El. Y como un buen doctor puede diagnosticar y corregir un problema que nos causa dolor físico, Dios puede identificar y sanar las heridas y pecados en nuestros

Es importante recordar que Dios no previno el sufrimiento de Su propio Hijo. Jesucristo lloró cuando falleció su querido amigo Lázaro. Se sentía mucha pena para la gente rebelde que vivían en Jerusalén, diciendo que quería "juntar a tus hijos, como la gallina junta sus pollitos debajo de sus alas" (Mateo 23:37)," lamentado que habían escogido rechazar el mensaje de salvación. Y aunque el dolor físico que Jesucristo sufrió en la cruz fue casi imaginable, fue la separación de su Padre a causa de llevarse nuestros pecados que le causó la última agonía. "Dios mio, Dios mio, ¿por que me has abandonado?" gritó.

Hay buenas noticias: El dolor no tiene la última palabra. Cuando nos sentimos avergonzados, frustrados, aislados, o tristes, siempre podemos recurrir a Dios, quien nos ofrece una paz que el dinero no puede comprar, una paz más grande que nuestras circunstancias. Y aunque no podemos escapar el dolor mientras vivimos en este mundo, sí que podemos relajarnos y tener gozo, seguro

que Dios está usando nuestros desafíos y dolores para formar nuestros carácteres, y que ha prometido traer a Sus hijos a una vida eterna donde no habrá lágrimas.

"Entonces oí una gran voz que decía desde el trono: He aquí, el tabernáculo de Dios está entre los hombres, y El habitará entre ellos y ellos serán su pueblo," dice Apocalipsis 21:3-4. "Dios mismo estará entre ellos[b]. El enjugará toda lágrima de sus ojos, y ya no habrá muerte, ni habrá más duelo, ni clamor, ni dolor, porque las primeras cosas han pasado."

¿Necesita la ayuda de Dios para lidiar con los pecados y dolores que to ahogan? ¿Quieres aceptar Su invitación a un futuro donde – gracias a la muerte y resurrección de Su Hijo Jesucristo – Él enjugará toda lágrima de sus ojos"? Lee "Sin Pena No Hay Gloria."

#### Sin Pena No Hay Gloria

"Dios nos susurra en nuestros placeres, nos habla en nuestras conciencias, pero nos grita en nuestros dolores," dice escritor cristiano C. S. Lewis. "Es su megáfono para despertar a un mundo duro de oído."

Algunos dolores nos los buscamos nosotros mismos por trasgedir las leyes de Dios, y algunos dolores son causados por eventos fuera de nuestro control. Pero Dios nos ofrece perdón y curación para todo lo que nos aflige. Tenemos la oportunidad de convertirnos en hijos adoptivos de Dios.

Si desea recibir el regalo de salvación, puedes decir una oración como la siguiente:

Dios, no quiero estar separado de Ti. Gracias por Tu Hijo Jesucristo quien tomó el castigo que yo merecí cuando murió por mi en la cruz. Te doy control sobre me vida. Por favor, ayúdame a llevar una vida que Te da gloria, y que muestra Tu amor a los demás. En el nombre de Jesucristo, Amen.

Si has determinado seguir a Cristo y quieres saber más sobre Su vida, muerte, y resurrección, Inside Journal quiere ayudarte a inscribirte en un programa de estudio bíblico por correspondencia – y obtener una Biblia, si no puedes obtener una por su capellán. Escríbanos hoy: "Sin Pena No Hay Gloria," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790.

#### Cumpliendo SU Tiempo: Meditaciones y Oraciones para Hombres y Mujeres en la Prisión

Por James C. Vogelzang con Lynn Vanderzalm

Prefacio por Charles Colson

#### **Cumpliendo SU Tiempo**

es una devocional para reclusos con entradas para cada día. El capellán puede recibir una caja de libros (cantidades limitadas), o tú puedes recibir un libro para ti mismo.

El capellán o director de servicios religiosos debe escribir a:

PO Box 91509
Santa Barbara, CA 93190



"Puedes confiar en Jim porque el amor de Dios fluye de su corazón. Los que estamos detrás de las rejas nos preguntamos en desesperación cómo re-armar nuestras vidas. Este libro nos muestra cómo Dios nos dará una vida con sentido. Arrestado a los diecisiete años, he podido cumplir SU tiempo, de su manera. ¡Tú también puedes!" - Cynthia, encarcelada 18 años

"Jim es 'amigo de los pecadores.' Su amor y compasión para los que estamos bajo llave y detrás de los muros de la prisión se derrama en las páginas de este libro, que está lleno de sabiduría y aliento."

- Joanna, encarcelada 23 años

# Transfórmate en un Mejor Padre

Una entrevista con Gregory Slayton

regory W. Slayton es un empresario exitoso, un autor de libros más vendidos, un exembajadero a las Bermudas, y

(lo más importante en sus ojos) el padre de cuatro hijos. Mientras vivir en cinco continentes diferentes, tomó apuntes sobre lo que tenían en común los padres excelentes que conoció en varios lugares. Su diario se convirtió en la base para su libro Be a Better Dad Today: 10 Tools Every Father Needs (Transfórmate en un Mejor Padre Hoy: 10 Herramientas Cada Padre Necesita), un libro publicado por Regal Publishers in 2012. Inside Journal entrevistó a Gregory para aprender como padres encarcelados pueden contribuir al bienestar de sus hijos.

#### IJ: ¿Cómo era su familia cuando era niño?

Gregory: De veras no tenía un padre cuando era joven. Él se iría y regresaría cuando quería. Al fin, se fue y nunca regresó. Era una situación muy difícil y dolorosa. Siempre teníamos comida y un techo, y fui a la universidad. Había muchas benediciones, pero mi niñez no era feliz.



**Gregory Slayton** 

#### IJ: ¿Cómo aprendió ser un buen padre?

Gregory: Di mi corazón a Cristo cuando era un estudiante universitario. Quería mucho casarme, pero no tenía la menor idea de como ser un buen padre. Pensaba hacer lo opuesto de lo que había hecho mi propio padre. Pero me di cuenta de que mi estrategía no sería suficiente. Necesitaba buenos modelos a imitar. Por eso empecé a mantener un diario, tomando apuntes sobre los hábitos de buenos padres que conocí en varios paises. Observé a buenos padres alrededor del mundo y como se portaban con sus hijos. Por ejemplo me acuerdo de un padre excelente en Buenos Aires, Argentina. Siempre sacaba tiempo para estar con sus adolescentes. Era una grande familia católica. Ese padre solía comer el almuerzo o la cena con sus adolescentes aunque fue un ejecutvio muy ocupado ... Cuando se quitan las diferencias culturales, hay

muchas semejanzas entre buenos padres en varios continentes. Al inicio, el diario fue para ayudarme a ser un buen padre, pero entonces algunos de mis amigos me dijeron que debiera convertirlo en un libro sobre la paternidad. Por la gracia de Dios, Regal Publishers publicó el libro en 2012, y hasta hoy, se han vendido 65.000 copias. Mi esposa y yo decidimos dar todos los derechos del autor a varias organizaciones benéficas, así que esperamos que haya sido una doble benedición.

#### IJ: ¿Por qué son importantes los padres?

Gregory: Para los hombres que tienen hijos, no hay ningún trabajo más importante que ser un padre. Los padres hacen un papel crucial en las vidas de sus hijos e hijas, como demuestran las estadísticas. Uno de los factores más importante en el éxito o fracaso de un joven es la instrucción y el amor que reciben sus padres. Todos nosotros - nosotros que no tenían padres durante la niñez entendemos el dolor de no tener un padre a quien podemos acudir. Todos nos equivacomos de vez en cuando, ¡pero al menos que tengamos a alguien en nuestras vidas que nos ame es mejor que no tuviéramos a nadie! El reto para nuestra generación es: ¿Vamos ad

abandonar a nuestros hijos, o vamos a mantener una mejor relación con ellos que la que hemos tenido con nuestros propios padres?

#### IJ: ¿Pueden los hombres ser buenos padres aunque sus propios padres fueran menos que ideal?

Gregory: ¡Que buena pregunta! ¿Qué nos permite cambiar el curso de la historia y ser buenos padres, aunque no hemos tenido buenos padres durante nuestra juventud? Para mí, la cosa más importante era darme cuenta de que tenía a un Padre Divino. Mi padre terrenal me había abandonado, pero mi Padre Divino me amaba. Me costó mucho tiempo para comprender esta realidad en mi corazón. Es una realided muy importante. El segundo principio importante para padres es comprender que nuestros hijos nos necesitan profundamente. Quizás no lo dicen, pero es verdad. Incluso nuestro adolescentes nos necesitan, aunque no saben expresarlo. Quieren que nosotros seamos parte de sus vidas.

#### IJ: ¿Qué pueden hacer los padres que viven muy lejos de sus hjos?

Gregory: Padres de larga distancia son una categoía que está creciendo rápidamente, sea a causa de encarcelaminteo, servicio militar, o viaje de negocios. Yo fui un padre de larga distancia por más de un año. Durante el primer año, mi familia vivía en Nueva York, y yo vivía en Latinoamerica. Nos separó un vuelo de 12 horas. Mi consejo más importante para padres de larga distancia es esto: Asegúrate de que tus hijos sepan que tú los amas. Llámalos por teléfono. Escríbeles una carta cada semana.

#### IJ: ¿Si un padre ha quemado las naves con su familia, cómo puede empezar de nuevo?

Gregory: La reconciliación es un proceso muy largo. Quizás seas muy afortunado, y la primera vez que llamas a casa, tus hijos quieren verte. Pero si has causado mucho dolor en las vidas de tus hijos, el camino hacia la restauración suele ser duro y lento, con progreso hecho paso a paso. Para la mayoría de padres que no tienen una relación buena con sus hijos, recomiendo que empiecen por escribirles una carta sincera. En casi todas las circunstancias, tenemos que pedirles perdón. Si hemos lastimado a una otra persona - y si hemos sido lastimados - tenemos que aprender a perdonar y pedir perdón. Es un parte importante del proceso de curación. Otro consejo es empezar un grupo de paternidad con otros padres en la prisión, para que puedan discutir los retos que enfrentan en común y como derrotarlos. ■

# La FCC Limita Cargos Telefónicos para Internos

#### **Por Sarah Chaffee**

5C

uánto debe costar para llamar a casa? Martha Wright pagaba 1.000 dólares al

año para hablar con su nieto encarcelado, Ulandis Forte. Para Forte, quien estaba serviendo una sentencia de 18 años por homicidio, conversaciones con su abuela era un sustento importante – pero el costo no estaba al alcance de la anciana.

Forte dijo al periódico The Huffington Post que "a veces ella tenía que escoger entre comprar sus medicaciones y hablarme a mí." Wright interpuso una demanda hace 10 años sobre el costo de las llamadas.

Wright no es la única que enfrenta costos altos para llamadas telefónicas con un interno. En Georgia, una llamada a otro estado que dura 15 minutos cuesta más de 17 dólares, según un manual del usuario publicado por el estado. Alabamas, Arkansas, Ohio, y Minnesota también tienen tarifas muy altas, según The Hill, un blog congresional.

En agosto del 2013, la Comisión Federal de Comunicaciones (FCC) decidió regular cargos para llamadas interestatales de larga distancia. La comisión limitará precios a \$0,25 el minuto para llamadas a cobro revertido, y \$0,21 al minuto para llamadas prepagadas o pagadas con tarjeta de débito. La decisión se aplica a cárceles y prisiónes estatales y federales.

Estudios muestran que internos que tienen conversaciones frecuentes con sus seres queridos tienen una menor probabilidad de regresar a la prisión después de ser liberados. Además, la FCC cree que los 2,7 millones de niños que tienen un padre encarcelado beneficiarán de tener contacto más frecuente con sus padres.

"Las llamadas eran todo para mí," Forte dijo al Washington Informer, un periódico. "Siempre las anticipaba con alegria."

El costo de llamadas es tan alta porque los servicios teléfonicos en prisiones están provechos por compañias que ofrecen comisiones a las instituciones penales. De solito, la compañía que ofrece las comisiónes más altas recibe el contrato. Algunas compañías ofrecían comisiones hasta 60 por ciento.

Richard Smith, el director ejecutivo de Securus, una compañía



de servicios telefónicos, avisa que las nuevas regulaciones decididas por la FCC llevarán a precios más altos para llamadas locales, según el Huffington Post. La industria telefónica ha amenazado a demandar si la FCC no cambia las nuevas reglas.

Además, Ajit Pai, el comisionado de la FCC quien no está de acuerdo con la decisión, dijo a McClatchy News que tema que no habrá tanto servicio telefónico en las prisiones, visto que las compañías obtendrán menos beneficios.

"Hemos construído un sistema muy seguro para la industria correccional, y ayuda a resolver miles de crímenes cada año," dijo Smith. "Es un negocio con fines de lucro."

Pero el estado de Nueva York no permite comisiones, y los internos allá pagan solo unos centavos para cada minuto. La misma compañía que sirve Nueva York sirve Georgia, y el Prison Policy Initiative, un grupo que ayuda internos, cree que las nuevas reglas no tendrán efectos adversos para ellos.

Para gente como Wright, la decisión de la FCC ofrece la promesa de mejor comunicación con su nieto.

"Ya era hora," dijo al Washington Informer. "Tenía fe de que algún día pasará, y por fin ha pasado."

Según su sitio web, la FCC "busca comentarios sobre la reforma de cargos que afectan llamadas intra-estatales."

Ojalá que este cambio sea el primero de muchos que benefician a las familias de internos.



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Un miembro del Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability y el American Correctional Association

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# PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS OUT TO SPRING 2014

# Roy's Long Road to Paradise

by A.R. Quinn

AWAII – Roy Yamamoto grew up in paradise, leaving his footprints on Oahu's pristine beaches and surfing its warm, turquoise waves.

But his life wasn't a pictureperfect postcard. "I had a very violent upbringing," he remembers during an interview with Inside Journal. Although the members of his family loved one another, the frequent abuse scarred him.

School offered no refuge, because Roy's learning disability made it hard for him to read and write. Still, the opportunity to participate in sports kept him from dropping out. He excelled as a lineman on the football team. After high school graduation, he planned to play football for Sacramento College.

But Roy started hanging out with the wrong crowd. Instead of training to make himself a better athlete, he partied – hard.

"My career in drugs became more important than my career in football," he recalls.

Roy's situation became even more complicated when his then-girlfriend became pregnant. Trying to be responsible, he married her and took a job as an iron worker, just like his father.

At work, Roy noticed that many of his friends did "ice," or crystal meth. He swore to himself that he would never become like them; their addictions were costing them their jobs and their families.

#### A Dead-End Path

But one fateful day, a co-worker asked Roy if he wanted to have just one hit of ice. Despite his hesitation, Roy felt curious. Could ice really be that good?

With one choice, Roy's life entered a rapid tailspin. His craving for crystal meth ballooned into a \$1,000-a-day habit that lasted 20 years. Along with the drugs came a life of crime. His wife, frightened by the rough

Continued on page 2



Roy Yamamoto got hooked with just one hit of ice. His choices cost him his family and his freedom, but prison was just the beginning of his incredible story.

# Crime's Hidden Victims

by Ann Edenfield Sweet

hen my husband ended up in federal prison, I was left with

four boys to raise on \$800 a month. It was a bizarre, alienating experience; I felt like I had parachuted out of an airplane in the middle of the night, with no idea what country I had landed in, how to speak the language, what the customs were, or how to get home.

When my husband was released, I decided that I wanted to do something to help other prisoners' families. I founded Wings For LIFE International, which teaches family members how to cope with the legal system and how to interact with their incarcerated loved ones so when they come home from prison they can become productive, law-abiding citizens. Working with many families over the years, I have learned that it is easy for many prisoners to lose sight of the struggles faced by their families on the outside. The purpose of this article is to help the readers of Inside Journal stand in their families' shoes, and do what they can to help ease the situation for their loved ones.

These are some of the difficulties your family may face while you serve your sentence:

Learning how to navigate the legal system and the prison system. I have a college education, but my husband's arrest threw me into a world with a language that I did not understand. Prisoners' families often do not understand what is going to happen to their loved one next, where the prison is, who to contact if they have questions, or how to dress or behave when they

come visit.

Learning how to survive **financially.** If the prisoner was a breadwinner, his or her family must now make do with much less. Even if the prison accommodations are nothing to write home about, the prisoner knows that he or she will be housed, clothed, and fed, and have access to some sort of medical care. A prisoner's family may be trying to figure out how to stay off the street, keep the lights on, and keep food on the table. My kids and I went six years without medical care because we could not afford it. Trying to afford transportation and lodging costs for a visit is an added burden. **Social exclusion.** When my

Social exclusion. When my husband went to prison, my children and I were ostracized by our neighbors, businesses, schools, and even by our church. When

my husband was released, the senior pastor of our new church told us we had to leave. Even though we had not committed the crime, we were stigmatized by association.

Exhaustion and stress.
When one parent goes to prison, the person who cares for his or her children becomes the 24-hour-aday breadwinner, caretaker, chauffeur, tutor, disciplinarian, cook, etc. That is a lot of responsibility to fall on one person's shoulders, and there is usually no way to take a break – much less a vacation.

So, what can you do to make things easier?

Acknowledge and appreciate what they are going through. If your family comes to visit, be grateful for their sacrifice. Don't complain if they are late or



Ann Edenfield Sweet

tired when they arrive.

Make the most of phone calls and visits. Between calls and visits, make lists of questions you want to ask or issues you want to discuss. If you have more than one child, give each child a designated time to talk to you during a call or

Continued on page 2

visit, so that everyone gets

# A Parent's Job

#### **Guest Column: Quovadis Marshall**

When the doors of the prison closed behind me, the weight of my lengthy sentence overwhelmed my mind. Even heavier, however, was the thought that, like my father before me, I had abandoned my daughter, allowing her to become a statistic and a victim of her surroundings. After all, it was my job to provide for her, protect her, and point her in the right direction. What could I do now?

Quickly I took a lesson from Job. Job was a man in the Old Testament of the Bible who endured great suffering, pain, and loneliness. But he loved God, and he loved his children, and he is an example of how to endure and maintain hope even when we feel powerless to help our children.

One of the greatest things that we can do as parents is something we can do from far away: pray. Job did this. The Bible says that he "would rise early in the morning and offer

burnt offering according to the number [of his children]. For Job said, 'It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus Job did continually." (Job 1:5)

There are three things from the life of Job that we can identify and imitate. (1) Job sacrificed time and resources for his children. I would encourage you to invest in stamps and envelopes to write to your children weekly. If that's not possible, I'd suggest you write to them in a journal. (2) Job was concerned about his children's spiritual welfare. If you have the chance, tell your children about Jesus or encourage them to attend a local church. (3) Job woke

early to pray for his children on a regular basis. Let us do the

For those who don't have children of their own, you're not alone. Jesus had no earthly children, and yet the Bible calls him the "Everlasting Father." (Isaiah 9:6) For those of you without children, our prisons are filled with young men and women who need positive leadership and guidance. I'd encourage you to make yourself available

Quovadis Marshall is the national director of spiritual development for Prison Fellowship Ministries and a graduate of the InnerChange Freedom Initiative.

#### **Subscription Info**

At Inside Journal® (IJ), we receive many letters each week from inmates asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers - however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is only available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org. (The previous issue incorrectly listed the email address as inside\_journal@pfm.org.)

#### **Crime's Hidden Victims** Continued from page 1

some one-on-one time.

But children don't have to come to every visit. An occasional visit with just your spouse or significant other will allow you to have deeper, private conversations. Finally, when you are on the phone, don't ever, ever hang up in anger! Your family cannot call you back, and those hasty, angry words will just hang out there. If you need to discuss a touchy subject, save it for a letter or extended visiting hours.

- Have an emergency **plan.** If you get sick or injured, or if you are going to be sent to Ad-Seg, it helps to pick a person beforehand who can contact your family and let them know what happened. The prison probably will not let your loved ones know why you are suddenly out
- of touch. Make the most of your talents. A hand-drawn card from you, with a note inside describing how much your family means to you, might be-

#### come a treasured possession for your family - and it doesn't cost you anything

- Keep a record of when you send letters or cards. Your children might be in a situation where they do not receive what you send to them. If you can, keep copies of the letters, or even just a single log with entries of everything you send, saying something like, "June 2014, sent card for Amanda's birthday. September 2014, sent letter for Jimmy's middle-school graduation." In the future, if your child says, "Why didn't I hear from you?" you'll have a record proving how much you cared.
- Have a perfect record. Make the most of every day in prison. Take every educational opportunity. The best thing you can do for your family is to get out, stay out, and be there for them.

God doesn't make junk. People make mistakes, but they can also change and become the people He intended them to be. By implementing some of these simple steps, you can help your family cope while you do your time.

cut Roy free from serving any

Agape, a ministry to prison-

ers' children in Hawaii, which

has been going strong for nine

years. He runs it with the two

judges who set him free. The

friends and surfing buddies,

also performed the ceremony

for Roy and his bride when he

re-married several years ago.

"Today," they said, "we're

Roy has re-united with his

daughter. He and his wife, Char-

As the leader of Camp Agape

and Prison Fellowship's field

director in Hawaii, Roy wakes

giving you a life sentence

lotte, also have a son.

of marriage!"

judges, who are now Roy's dear

In gratitude, Roy began Camp

additional time.

#### Roy's Road to Paradise Continued from page 1

characters that now surrounded him, filed for divorce. Roy lost both her and his daughter.

Roy's criminal activities ran the gamut: assault, kidnapping extortion, attempted murder, and second-degree robbery. When at last he hit rock-bottom, he sat in a four-by-eight prison cell, facing a conviction that carried a sentence of 80 years to life. Depression weighed on his soul. He thought of ending his life.

"My lawyer can't help me out of this. You can't help me. Let's see what God can do for me."

#### 'Tears of Joy'

Roy's cellmate was a follower of Jesus. He gave Roy his Bible and invited him to go to Bible study. With nothing to lose, Roy agreed to go.

As he walked to Bible study for the first time, some of his old friends confronted him and asked, "Where are you going with that Bible?"

Roy shrugged and said, "I don't know, but my lawyer can't help me out of this. You can't



Children of Hawaiian prisoners pose on the beach at Camp Agape, a summer camp Roy founded after his release from prison.

help me. Let's see what God

When Roy arrived at the Bible study, he noticed a different tmosphere. Everyone had a hopeful look in their eyes, and when the leader shared God's message of grace and truth with the group, he felt comforted for the first time since the prison doors slammed behind him. Roy prayed to ask Jesus to come into his heart and his life.

"There were uncontrollable tears coming out of my eyes, tears of joy, not tears of shame," Roy remembers with awe. "I was a new person when I said

#### **Finding Connection**

Roy still had no contact with his daughter, who was then a young girl. But he decided to sign her up for Angel Tree, a Prison Fellowship program

launched in 1982 to help prisoners connect with their children at Christmas by sending them a gift and a personal message of love. A church bought and delivered a gift to Roy's daughter in his name.

Roy relished the brief connection that Angel Tree gave him and his daughter, but he wanted more. He craved a chance to introduce his family and his friends to the same hope that God had given him in prison. He began to pray that God would make a way for him to be released, despite the long sentence hanging over his head.

Through an amazing series of legal proceedings, a Christian judge saw potential in Roy and dropped the charge against him; he was released from prison in 1996. But in 1998, Roy's case was appealed again. He appeared in court and pled

guilty. But this time, Roy wasn't alone. Members of his church came to support him, testifying that he was a new person. The

up every morning determined to help prisoners and their families experience true Paradise, knowing and loving the God who made him a new man.

#### Prayer Warriors CORNER

This season please join us in prayer for these concerns:

- That the Lord would continue to provide resources and volunteers to restore prisoners, families, and communities affected by crime to their full, God-given potential.
- That the Lord would heal the hearts of children and families of those who are currently incarcerated.
- That God would transform the hearts of men and women behind bars with His love, to radically change prisons and the entire culture.

Lift your voice with millions of other believers during Cry Out America, a national prayer movement, on September

# Lost Without a Trace

by A.R. Quinn

ALAYSIA - The world may never know what happened to Malaysia Airlines Flight 370.

The aircraft, a Boeing 777, left Kuala Lumpur International Airport at 12:41 a.m. local time, en route to Beijing, China, with 12 Malaysian crew members and 227 passengers representing 14 different countries. Within 20 minutes, the plane, traveling at 542 miles per hour, had reached its cruising altitude of 35,000 feet. Forty minutes into the flight, the plane's experienced captain, Zaharie Ahmad Shah, or perhaps the co-pilot, Fariq Abdul Hamid, said "good night" to the air traffic control crew.

Radar pings showed that afterward, the plane made an abrupt change in course over the Gulf of Thailand. After that, nothing is known for certain.

A Boeing 777 has a 200-foot wingspan. It is 209 feet long, and it can carry 45,000 gallons of fuel. It should not be easy to lose, but after its final radio communication, MH370 and the 239 souls aboard disappeared as if into

For weeks, a team of searchers from many countries spared no effort or expense to find the missing plane and its passengers. Searchers have used satellites. an American P-8 spy plane, additional aircraft, ships, and even a British submarine to try to locate the plane somewhere in the Indian Ocean, where it is believed the plane would have crashed.

The hunt for MH370 has reportedly turned into the largest search and rescue operation in history. A few satellite images showed debris that might possibly have come from the plane, but on the date this newspaper was published, nothing had been discovered. Without hard evidence,

He finds us. He does whatever it takes to rescue us, even when all hope seems lost. In chapter 15 of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells this story: "If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the 99 others in the wilderness

A member of the U.S. military directs a plane helping with the search

and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep."

**Found at Last** 

Saul of Tarsus, another man we read about in the Bible, was one of those "lost sheep." He thought he was perfect, because he had a spotless family pedigree, he was well-educated, and he never broke the law. But his heart reeked of pride and hatred, until God found him. Saul became a new man with a new name: Paul He realized that all his outward respectability was a meaningless front, and he left everything behind for what he called "the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." (Philippians 3:8, NLT) He became one of the leaders of the early Christian Church, and he wrote a large chunk of the New Testament.

God is a seeker. He wants to find you, wherever you are. He spared no expense - not even the life of His Son, Jesus - in order to find you. At every step in your life, He has been tracking your movement, whispering your name, waiting for the day you would turn around and see Him pursuing you so He can pour out His mercy, grace, peace, and hope on you. The only question is: Are you ready to be found? ■

#### for a missing Malaysian Airlines flight some have speculated that the

### Search and Rescue

Our wandering and wrongdoing lead us far away from God, but He does not wait for us to somehow find our way back to Him, or do enough good deeds to make ourselves acceptable to Him. He shows us mercy. He goes out of His way to find us when we are unable to find our own way home. He only asks that we repent of, or turn our backs on, our sin, and believe in Jesus for forgiveness and new life. You can start right now by having a conversation with God. You can use words like the ones below. The important thing is to be sincere:

God, on my own I would be lost without a trace. I cannot save myself. Thank You for coming to find me. I want to turn my back on my old way of thinking and behaving. Forgive me for the wrong I've done. Make me a new person, and give me Your Holy Spirit to guide me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Being found by God is just the beginning of a lifelong journey of healing and restoration with Him.

If you've decided that you want to learn more about the first steps of that journey, Inside Journal wants to help. Write to "Search and Rescue," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. We'll connect you with a partner that provides a free correspondence Bible study

and a Bible, if you don't already have access to one through your facility.

#### **World News of Note**

#### 1 Sentencing **Changes in Store?**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The United States Sentencing Commission, which advises federal judges on sentencing, voted to lower the sentencing guideline levels that apply to most federal drug trafficking offenders.

The drug guidelines under the amendment would remain linked to statutory mandatory minimum penalties. The Commission estimates that approximately 70 percent of federal drug trafficking defendants would qualify for the change, with their sentences decreasing an average of 11 months, or 17 percent, from 62 to 51 months on average.

In 2014 the Commission has

focused on bringing down federal prison costs and capacity with a continued commitment to public safety. The Commission estimates that the amendment reducing drug guidelines would reduce the federal prison population by more than 6,500 over five years, with an even bigger long-term impact.

plane was hijacked - that it did

supposed hijackers wanted to

its communications systems.

**A Hopeless Search** 

not appear on radar because the

make it disappear by shutting off

The Bible says that God has

undertaken a similar search

mission, looking for someone -

anyone - who has a pure heart

and does right. In Psalm 14, the

writer says, "The Lord looks down

from heaven on the entire human

race; he looks to see if anyone is

truly wise, if anyone seeks God.

But no, all have turned away; all

have become corrupt. No one

does good, not a single one!"

Like the authorities searching

for MH370, God combs the globe

and finds nobody who meets His

holy, perfect standard. Not you.

Not me. Everyone – in prison or

free - does plenty of wrong. We

are all lost, adrift in the sea of our

own sin, without a trace of hope.

But the Bible also says that

God will never rest content until

(Psalm 14:2-3, NLT)

The changes will be sent to Congress by May 1, 2014. If Congress does not oppose the changes, they will go into effect November 1, 2014.

#### 2 Crisis in the Crimea

UKRAINE - A conflict with overtones of the Cold War is unfolding in Crimea, a peninsula in the Black Sea that is connected

to the Eastern European nation of Ukraine. Earlier this year, the allegedly corrupt, pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanu kovych was forced out of office by protestors. He fled to neighboring Russia. In the chaotic aftermath of the revolution, Russia has seized military control of the Crimean region, where many people speak Russian and have a Russian cultural heritage.

In a referendum, Crimeans overwhelmingly voted to become part of Russia, and the Russian legislature has voted to annex, or accept, them. But the U.S. and the European Union say that the referendum and the annexation are illegal. The U.S. has imposed penalties on its former Cold War foe. Russia accuses the United States and other European countries of having funded and directed the Ukrainian revolution. Sporadic



Crimea, with no clear end to the conflict in sight.

#### 3 UN Peacekeepers Sent to **Protect Lives**

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPBULIC - On April 10, 2014, the United Nations Security Council voted to send 12,000 peacekeepers to protect the lives of people in the Central

African Republic, a former French colony that has suffered from terrible violence in recent months.

The peacekeepers will be permitted to support law and order in the country, because its police and courts systems are no longer functioning. They will also monitor widespread human rights abuses and help arrest those accused of war crimes.

France will keep a 2,000-member force in the country until the UN peacekeepers arrive. ■

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# Offscreen With "Papa Joe" Bradford

A Q&A with Papa Joe by Zoe Erler

oe Bradford is father to eight children, but he is "Papa" to hundreds. Brought into the spotlight by the film "Unconditional" (2012) that chronicles Bradford's life from his childhood as one of the only black students in an integrated school to his time in prison for computer hacking to his decision to start Elijah's Heart, an organization that ministers to underprivileged children in Nashville, Tenn., "Papa Joe" is now excited to share his message of hope with men behind bars. IJ spent a few minutes talking with Bradford about some of the most pivotal moments of his life and what he's learned about fatherhood along the way.

IJ: Tell me about your childhood. Particularly, how did attending one of the first integrated schools affect you?

Bradford: I was born in 1961. I was in the third class to enter into integrated schools. Two buses came by where I lived: the white bus and the black bus. My mother wanted me to get "cultural training" and made me ride the white bus. That's where

I met the little girl who plays the "Sam" character in the movie. Because she became my friend, she was bullied. I had to protect her honor, so I beat up the bully. Several times.

IJ: How did you get from beating up school bullies to hacking into computers?

Bradford: In high school, I thought maybe it would be good to make good grades, so I started hanging around nerds. I got straight As and ended up landing a scholarship to study engineering at the University of Tennessee. During that time, I discovered I had a knack for computers. By day, I tutored other students in programming languages. By night, I became one of the original computer hackers. On a dare, I decided to hack into an ATM system. Although I wasn't caught during the actual hack, I was caught with a debit card that I used to prove the hack worked.

IJ: After that, you spent 18 months behind bars, a time that you consider one of the lowest points of your life. But something unexpected came out of it. Can you describe what happened?

Bradford: To get work release, I had to go to the notorious Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary. While there, I had a run in with another bully. This guy (known as "Big Mac" in the movie) was torturing my friend. I had the choice to walk away or defend my friend. I ended up in a big fight. Instead of going back to work release, they put me in solitary confinement for 40 days. That was a big turning point for me. I was a college student headed to a \$40,000 job and I found myself almost killing someone. I found myself with almost nothing. I didn't know who I could trust. I didn't know night from day. I was afraid I was going to die in prison. The only way to overcome this was to release all of me to God. I said, "Whatever you want of me, Lord, it's yours." I didn't have anything, but the nothing I had I gave to Him.

IJ: But you didn't die in prison. In fact, you were released not long afterward. What happened then?

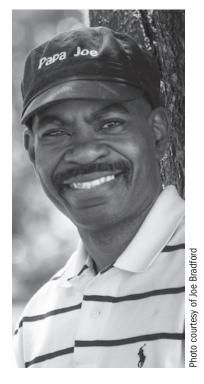
Bradford: After being released back to Nashville, I met a woman named Denise. We became best friends and got married. But

not long afterward, we discovered I had a kidney disease which made it impossible for me to work. We had to move to the projects because we didn't have any money. On the first day in the projects, a little deaf girl comes to our door. Denise gave her a piece of candy. But what happens when you give one kid candy? Before we knew it, we had 50 kids coming to our door. Denise is a music teacher, so we decided to start a children's choir. Soon, we had parents dropping kids off at our house who didn't even know us. We started working with these kids and it became a big giant family. And then it grew even bigger. We started asking for donations from local churches to feed these children and their families. Eventually we moved out of the projects, but the ministry to these children just grew. We recently did a giveaway for 800 families in one day.

IJ: Because of your perspective as a former prisoner and now as someone who ministers to children, what advice can you give parents who are in prison?

Bradford: It's a misunderstanding in our country that male prisoners are all "deadbeat dads." I

don't believe that. When I was in jail, I met a lot of dads. One of the most common topics among them was their children. Communication is one of the biggest keys of love. Any opportunity to write a letter, I would do it, even if you don't think the child will read it. Just the mere sight of a letter coming from dad, God can use that. Then pray for reconciliation with your child. And lastly, see what resources are available at your prison that you can take advantage of to improve yourself that will affect your child.



# Connect With Your Child This Christmas!

### What is Angel Tree?

Maybe you've heard of Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program, but you're not sure how it works. Angel Tree is a simple way to let your children know that you are thinking about them at Christmas.

Angel Tree works like this: Applications are shipped to the chaplains of participating prisons in early June. You fill out an application asking Angel Tree to give your child a gift from you at Christmas (you can suggest what kind of gift you think your child would like). Your chaplain collects all the applications and sends them to Angel Tree by the deadline. In the fall, Angel Tree volunteers call the person who takes care of your child to verify what gift your child would like to receive. Before Christmas, Angel Tree volunteers will buy and wrap the gift. The gift will be delivered to your child's home or given to your child at an Angel Tree Christmas party along with a presentation of the Gospel. Your child will be told that the gift is from you - their mom or dad who loves them! Plus, your brief, personal message to your child will be written on the gift tag.



#### A Gift From Your Heart to Theirs ...

This summer is the time to sign your children up to receive a Christmas present from you through Angel Tree. Applications for Christmas 2014 must be postmarked by September 2, 2014. Ask your chaplain or program coordinator for an application, and either the chaplain or program coordinator must submit it for you when you are done.

There are some important restrictions to the Angel Tree program, so please read carefully before filling out an application:



A Program of Prison Fellowship®

- 1) You **must** be the child(ren)'s father, mother, stepfather, or stepmother.
- 2) There **must not be a court order** restricting your contact with the child(ren) or their caregiver(s).
- 3) Your child(ren) must live in the United States.
- 4) Your child(ren) must be **18 years old or younger.**
- The form must be filled out completely and legibly.
- 6) The form must be signed.
- 7) The form must be **postmarked by September 2, 2014.**

Get an application and sign your kids up today! A special gift from you at Christmas will help them know that you love them, and it will connect them with a church that can come alongside your family in your absence. Best of all, it will give them an opportunity to experience the transforming love of Jesus

Angel Tree makes great efforts to serve every eligible child. Sometimes, however, if we are unable to locate your children's caregiver, if the caregiver refuses to participate, or if there are not enough Angel Tree volunteers in a local area, we may not be able to deliver gifts to your children.

If your facility is not signed up and has not received applications, your chaplain may contact **1-800-55-ANGEL** for more information on how to participate.





# PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS OUT TO SUMMER 2014

# The Power to Forgive

#### by Kate Campbell

was a judge you really didn't want to appear in front of," says Tom Kohl, presiding judge in Washington County, Oregon.
"I was really harsh, especially toward drug addicts that were charged with crimes."

An estimated 30,000 people abuse alcohol or illicit drugs in Washington County, and Tom felt little compassion when they appeared before him in court. But Tom's attitude changed when he learned that his own daughter, Megan, was abusing drugs. As he saw her sinking deeper into drug abuse, his sympathy for drug addicts grew, and he began a drug court in March 2005 to help people like her.

Drug court is an intensive treatment program for addicts who have been charged with crimes. It involves counseling, group therapy, employment, and a weekly meeting with a judge.

"Our mission in drug court is

to save people's lives, to break the cycle of addiction, and to restore family relationships," says Tom.

Tom hoped that drug court would help his addicted daughter.

"[My wife and I] were praying that Megan would be brought into the system because she wasn't being accountable to anyone," says Tom. "People who are moms and dads of addicts can understand that prayer."

The Kohls' prayers were answered when authorities charged Megan with meth distribution in May 2006, but she would never have an opportunity to face justice.

On July 21, 2006, at the age of 21, Megan was murdered.

"It's a parent's worst nightmare," says Tom. "When I received word from the police officer ... there was so much sorrow, despair, hopelessness."

#### 'I Turned to God'

In the midst of tragedy, Tom found hope in his relationship

with Goo

"You either turn to God or away from God in situations like that," says Tom. "I turned to God."

This decision to turn to God saved Tom from being unforgiving toward Robert, the man who murdered his daughter.

"Unforgiveness turns into bitterness and anger, and that can just ruin your life," says Tom. "Unforgiveness is a prison. When you come to a point when you can forgive, you're set free."

During the trial, Tom came face to face with Robert.

"I had a chance to tell him in court that I had forgiven him before I even met him, which was only possible through the presence of Jesus Christ in my life," says Tom.

On April 9, 2009, the jury sentenced Robert to life without parole.

#### A Father Becomes an Author

After the trial was finished, Tom felt compelled to write a



Tom Kohl prays with an inmate at Louisiana State Penitentiary, where he shared his story of forgiveness.

Continued on page 2

# **Brotherhood Behind Bars**

### by Quovadis Marshall and Jesse Wiese

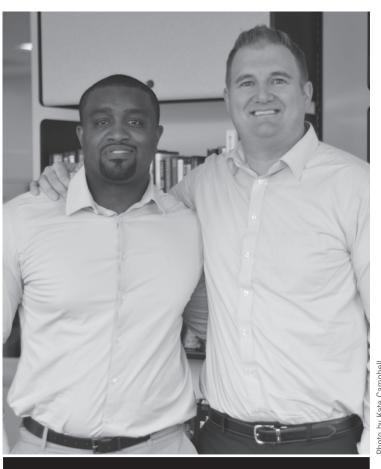
Quovadis Marshall is the director of spiritual development at Prison Fellowship Ministries. Jesse Wiese is a policy analyst for Justice Fellowship, a branch of Prison Fellowship Ministries that works to improve the criminal justice system. These long-time friends sat down together with Inside Journal to discuss what it takes to form lasting friendships behind bars.

W

e both received the same sentence, and we were both serv-

ing the same amount of time. We were even released within two weeks of each other. But besides being in the same prison at the same time, we were as different as black and white, in every sense of the word.

Jesse is an introvert, but I



Quovadis Marshall and Jesse Wiese formed an unusual friendship in unlikely circumstances.

(Quovadis) am an extreme extrovert. I grew up poor, but he grew up pretty affluent. He went to private Christian schools, so I think I was the second black friend he had.

From our personal differences to the distinctions of prison culture, there were plenty of barriers to our friendship. But we found that we did have something in common – we were both fallen men in need of a Savior, and that brought us together. What drew us together was our depravity; what solidified our friendship was that we had become new men, and we had been invited to be brothers in the family of God.

#### A Friendship Begins

Our friendship actually started off on a bit of a rough patch. I (Jesse) worked in the library, and Quovadis used to come in all the time with all these young guys, and it would annoy me. They would talk about the Bible

and different theological topics, and I thought a lot of what he said was wrong and inaccurate.

One day, I (Quovadis) was in the library, and Jesse joined in on the conversation, and we ended up having somewhat of a lively debate. I remember thinking, 'Who's this white uppity rich kid?' But I still saw him in the library every day, and after a while, we just began to strike up conversations. As soon as we got to know each other, it became obvious we would be friends for life. As much as we would get on each other's nerves, we both knew we were in it for the long haul.

Jesse and I were part of the InnerChange Freedom Initiative, which is a reentry program run by Prison Fellowship. Going to that program was culture shock for me. Prison is highly segregated, but in this program, I saw hundreds of men, black and white together, singing songs and praising God.

Continued on page 2

### **Letters to the Editor**

#### 'Dealing With Grief'

When I was first told about my father's passing, I instantly went into the state of sadness, and denying to myself that he was gone. What really helped me cope with the loss of my father was. ... knowing even though I am in prison, there were people, both inmates and staff, that ... were there for me ... Going to church was also a real big help. All of the Christian brothers were very, very supportive. ... You might think you are alone in grief and the pain, and have nobody to talk to, but there is always someone that can help you through. Also pray to the Lord and ask Him to give you comfort, and peace.

- J. W., Pennsylvania

#### 'Becoming a Better Dad'

I have turned my life over to my Father in Heaven to do with as He sees fit. I got a newspaper from a fellow Christian at our last prison church service. ... One article in particular drew me to my knees and made me cry and beg God to forgive me and help me with my journey of repairing my relationship with my three boys (ages 13, 18, 19). The article was entitled "Becoming a Better Dad." I want to be a good father, like my Father in Heaven

- J.M., California

#### 'Stopping the Shooting'

**Power to Forgive** 

Continued from page 1

book about his experience.

Tom finished his book, "Losing

but he likes to say that he had

"God put it on my heart to

visit the murderer of my daugh-

ter and talk with him," says Tom.

"I was

a judge

you

Megan," in November 2010:

one more chapter to write.

The way to keep children safer is to stop trying to make laws that infringe upon a person's Second Amendment rights so that they

can protect their children and families. Allow everyone, regular citizens or ex-cons (because I'm soon to be one), to have their Second Amendment right to bear arms. To reduce the rate of gun violence, teach more gun safety and how and why guns are really

- W.S.R., North Carolina

#### 'Crime's Hidden Victims'

I am contacting you for two purely selfish reasons. The first of which is to thank you for the

wonderful and inspiring articles in your spring 2014 Prison Fellowship newspaper. I recently (May 2014) had the opportunity to read volume 23, no. 2; and was truly inspired by Ann Edenfield Sweet's 'Crime's Hidden Victims' because I have found myself in the same exact situation, with the very same concerns that she spoke on. And I have found that the advice she gave is sound, practical, and effective. Many thanks and may God continue to bless her with the wisdom and inspiration that she shares with people like myself all over the

I would also like to thank and commend Mr. Ouovadis Marshall for his excellent and touching guest column 'A Parent's Job,' and though I am sad to say it touched me in a more profound way 'personally,' nonetheless I car truly say that it also helped to open my eyes to the reality of 'my situation. And may God continue to bless him also.

--J.L.. Florida

#### **Subscription Info**

mates asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers - however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is only available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-

At Inside Journal® (IJ), we receive many letters each week from in-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

#### **Brotherhood** Continued from page 1

In prison, there are unspoken social expectations. You find brotherhood with those who are the same, and the first factor is skin color, the second is gang affiliation. The status quo in prison is that you stay with your own people. But when we entered this program, all of those things went away. And we quickly learned that in the Kingdom of God, you can find brotherhood with those who are different.

We ended up being roommates for a while before we were both transferred to a minimum security facility. We worked to plant a church in that facility, and we fought hard and learned a lot. We learned that it's good that we're different and that we have different spiritual gifts. We complement each other well. We relied on each other. There's a tie that binds us that is stronger than our differences.

We've been friends now for over 12 years. We were each other's best men at our weddings, and we began working together at Prison Fellowship Ministries. We are advocates together for restoration. We view each other as more than just a faithful friend, but a brother.

#### **Finding Friendship Behind Bars**

When people go to prison, they aren't looking to make friends. No one is in prison because they want to be. Though prison may not seem like an ideal place to forge lifelong friendships, friendship can be found by all who seek it. Friendship takes trust and it takes time. It's about vulnerability, it's

about fighting for each other's greatness, it's about loyalty and commitment, and it's about honesty.

You're bound to meet someone who is interested in the same things as you are; it's really about putting yourself in the best position to meet those people. If you like to read, go to the library. If you like to shoot hoops, go to the basketball courts. If you're studying to get your GED, find other people to study with. If you're a father, spend time with other men who have children. Keep in mind, though, that you become like who you hang out with. The adage remains true: "Show me your friends and I'll show you your future."

If you want to meet people on the Christian journey, you need to put yourself where Christians go. See what kind of classes or programs you have that will give you the opportunity to meet people who are on the same journey as you. Find like-minded people who are going the same direction. Trust that the Lord will bring people to you.

Remember that developing relationships while you're in prison doesn't mean they end when you are released; the friendships that begin in prison can continue past the gates. Our friendship was founded on something greater than ourselves. When you meet someone with the same mission and vision as you, you're always going to meet them along that path at some point. Community is not determined by where you live or what you choose to be a part of; community is shared values, shared faith, and shared suffering. Community can happen

affected him so much that he

anywhere.

Michelle Obama showed her support.

### **Kidnapped and Held Captive** by Kate Campbell

their boarding

friends, and future. Boko Haram

to sell the girls into child slavery

and forced prostitution. The girls

will be offered for as little as \$12.

has publicly announced its plans

Many reports speculate that the girls are being held captive somewhere in Nigeria's forests, HIBOK, NIGERIA but the Nigerian military has not While hundreds of yet searched the area. Frustrated by the government's lack of acwere sleeping at tion, many local hunters, armed with homemade weapons, have school the night prepared to join the search for before their final exam, many were the kidnapped girls. The United awoken - not by pre-test jitters, States and the United Kingdom but by kidnappers, who stole more have also sent military experts than 200 of them from their beds to Nigeria to help search for the night of April 14, 2014. An the girls. extremist Islamic terrorist group, Boko Haram has staged Boko Haram, loaded the girls, aged 16 to 18, into trucks, taking them away from their families,

countless attacks in Nigeria since 2002. The group, whose name means "Western education is forbidden," rejects democracy, opposes the education of women, and justifies violence and slavery as acceptable practices.



The news of the kidnapping of over 200 Nigerian school-girls gained international attention and sparked the trending hashtag #BringBackOurGirls. Even first lady

Boko Haram came as a thief in the night, abducting the girls from their families, burning down buildings, and taking many lives in the process. Jesus Christ once spoke of a similar thief, saying, "The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life." (John 10:10, NLT) The thief Jesus describes isn't a literal thief like Boko Haram. In this passage of the Bible, the thief is Satan, God's enemy. Satan desires to steal, kill, and destroy our lives through sin, the self-centered thoughts and actions that hurt God, other people, and ourselves. The Bible says that living in sin is like being a prisoner. "An evil man is held captive by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him." (Proverbs 5:22, NLT) Jesus even compared sin to slavery: "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins

is a slave of sin." (John 8:34, NLT) Each person is born as a slave to sin, but it began with Adam and Eve, the first humans. When God created the earth, it was a perfect place without sin. However, Satan tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God, and when they chose to disobey, sin entered the world. Ever since, people have continued to sin, so that every generation lives estranged from God and from one another. The cycle never stops.

#### **Setting Captives Free**

How, then, can we experience true freedom from this slavery? God sent Jesus Christ to bring us freedom and life, "to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed." (Isaiah 61:1, NLT) Jesus lived a sinless life, but He took the punishment for all of our sins so that we could be freed from the slavery of our

#### Free Indeed

We are all held captive to sin, but Jesus is the only person who is able to free us from that slavery. We can experience freedom through a relationship with Jesus Christ. When we pray to God from our hearts, He hears us and answers us:

God, I know I've chosen to be a slave to sin, but today, I want freedom. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to bring me freedom through His death. I want to have a relationship with You so I can know what it means to have life to the full. Forgive me for the ways I've sinned and give me Your Holy Spirit to help me be free from sin every day.

If you've decided you want to know more about experiencing freedom from the captivity of sin, Inside Journal wants to help. Write to "Free Indeed," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA, 20146-1790. We'll connect you with a partner organization that provides a free correspondence Bible study and a Bible, if you don't have access to one through your facility.

sin. Even after Jesus died, He wasn't finished with His mission! God raised Him from the dead to show that He had even freed us from the power of death, and we could have life with Him forever. Because Jesus has come to rescue us from slavery, we are freed from captivity to sin! "So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free." (John 8:36, NLT) Through a relationship with Jesus Christ you can experience true freedom from sin. Sin will no longer steal your life like a thief, but instead you can experience life to its fullest through Jesus Christ - a life full of joy, love, peace, redemption, and

Sometimes, we find it hard to believe that Jesus really freed us from our sin, when we feel like sin has destroyed our lives. In chapter 23 of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus had another encounter with a thief. As Jesus was being put to death, hanging on a cross, there were two other men alongside him being put to death for their

"One of the criminals hanging beside Him scoffed, 'So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!' But the other criminal protested, 'Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We de serve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.' And Jesus replied, 'I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:39-43, NLT)

His Kingdom, no matter what they've done. Jesus loves each of us so deeply that He died so we would be freed from sin, and now God sees you as completely sinless and forgiven when you have a relationship with Jesus Christ. In that relationship, you can experience life to the full, like Jesus promises! ■

ANGEL TREE

Jesus invites every person into

## Connect With Your Child This Christmas!

#### What is Angel Tree?

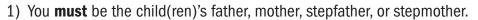
Maybe you've heard of Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program, but you're not sure how it works. Angel Tree is a simple way to let your children know that you are thinking about them at Christmas.

Angel Tree works like this: Applications are shipped to the chaplains of participating prisons in early June. You fill out an application asking Angel Tree to give your child a gift from you at Christmas (you can suggest what kind of gift you think your child would like). Your chaplain collects all the applications and sends them to Angel Tree by the deadline. In the fall, Angel Tree volunteers call the person who takes care of your child to verify what gift your child would like to receive. Before Christmas, Angel Tree volunteers will buy and wrap the gift. The gift will be delivered to your child's home or given to your child at an Angel Tree Christmas party along with a presentation of the Gospel. Your child will be told that the gift is from you - their mom or dad who loves them! Plus, your brief, personal message to your child will be written on the gift tag.

#### A Gift From Your Heart to Theirs ...

This summer is the time to sign your children up to receive a Christmas present from you through Angel Tree. Applications for Christmas 2014 must be postmarked by September **2, 2014.** Ask your chaplain or program coordinator for an application, and either the chaplain or program coordinator must submit it for you when you are done.

There are some important restrictions to the Angel Tree program, so please read carefully

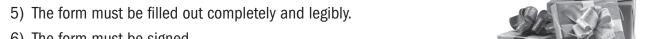


- 2) There **must not be a court order** restricting your contact with the child(ren) or their caregiver(s).
- 3) Your child(ren) must live in the United States.
- 4) Your child(ren) must be 18 years old or younger.
- 6) The form must be signed.
- 7) The form must be **postmarked by September 2, 2014.**

Angel Tree makes great efforts to serve every eligible child. Sometimes, however, if we are unable to locate your children's caregiver, if the caregiver refuses to participate, or if there are not enough Angel Tree volunteers in a local area, we may not be able to deliver gifts to your children.

If your facility is not signed up and has not received applications, your chaplain may contact 1-800-55-ANGEL for more information on how to





Get an application and sign your kids up today! A special gift from you at Christmas will help them know that you love them, and it will connect them with a church that can come alongside your family in your absence. Best of all, it will give them an opportunity to experience the

really didn't want to appear in front of."



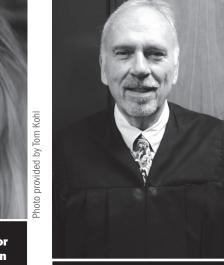
"Megan had a heart for people who were down and out," says Tom.

'People asked me why I [was going] to visit him, and I said, 'I don't know, but God is preparing my heart."

During the prison visit, Tom spent an hour with Robert. Tom recalls that after 15 minutes, he had nothing left to say. That's when he asked Robert if he had any questions in return.

"[Robert] said, 'I'm so sorry, ludge. ... how can you be so kind to me?' At that point, I knew that Jesus had opened the door for me to talk about the Gospel," says Tom.

Tom spent the rest of his visit



Through his position as a drug court judge, Tom has the opportunity to share his story of forgiveness

with many families.

in God.

"I thought I was writing the book for people who had suffered the loss of a child," says Tom. "But the door opened for me to start going into prisons to speak about hope and forgiveness and Jesus Christ."

telling Robert about his faith

The finished book, published in 2012, has taken Tom to places he never expected to go.

**The Story Spreads** 

Tom began sharing his story in prisons around the country, and is even traveling to Rwanda, a country in Africa, to speak in the prison system there.

Everywhere he goes, Tom meets someone who has been impacted by his story.

"Once at a luncheon I attended. I sat down next to a man I did not know. He asked me if I was Judge Kohl and cautiously told me that he used drugs with Megan. He told me that when she was murdered, it

stopped using drugs," says Tom. "Megan's death gave this man life. Only God can do something like that." Ultimately, Tom hopes his sto-

ry is an example of the freedom possible through forgiveness.

"There are a lot of people in prison who have that unforgiveness," says Tom. "You have to ask God for the power to forgive. We all struggle with it ... you need to get down on your knees every day and ask God to help." ■

#### PRAYER WARRIORS CORNER

how to live like Him and for Him

This summer, please pray for these concerns:

• That you and your fellow prisoners would grow in love

for God, people of different races and backgrounds, and

- those working for the DOC • For believers in Jesus to grow in their understanding of
- That your prison/jail would be peaceful and free from violence and hatred
- That families of prisoners would receive comfort as they live without their loved ones

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### **Author of 'Crazy Love' Speaks to Prisoners**

by A. R. Quinn

rancis Chan, a
nationally known
author, speaker,
and pastor,
volunteered to
speak at a Prison Fellowship
yard event in April 2014. He
sat down with Inside Journal to
discuss his message for men
and women behind bars.

#### IJ: What got you interested in prison ministry?

Francis: My interest in prison ministry started ... when I started to study the Word a little bit more deeply and understood the types of people that God typically chooses. They're not the people the world would typically choose to do great things. In my early years, I would pursue the rich, pursue the famous people, thinking, 'Wow, if we got them, they would just draw so many people to themselves, but then as I studied the Scriptures, I saw that that's not typically who God chooses. In fact, He would choose the people that no one else would, and I began going to the poor, began going overseas. ... [I] started thinking, 'You know, I bet you that's where the leaders are going to come from.'

#### IJ: Is there a particular Bible verse that sparked your thoughts about prison ministry?

Francis: One of the passages that really got to me was in

CHAPEL OF HOPE

TUST
JESUS

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YC

Francis Chan talks with a prisoner at a California prison. Chan spoke at a Prison Fellowship event during Easter weekend.

1 Corinthians, chapter one, where Paul says, "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God." (1 Corinthians 1:27-29, ESV) And He says, 'OK, I'm actually going to specifically pick people that the world would typically discard, because I'm going to raise these people up to the top, and they're actually going to shame the ones that think that they know it all or they've got it all together'. ... I

thought, 'OK, if that's who Jesus chose, then why am I going after these other people?'

#### IJ: Why did you decide to spend Easter weekend with prisoners?

Francis: [W]hen I was invited to come out here for Easter, I thought, 'What better way to spend my Easter weekend than going and just sharing the Good News with some of these people who may end up being the future leaders of the Christian movement in America?' ...

... This isn't typically how I would choose to spend Easter weekend. I've got my five kids at home, and haven't seen them from traveling and everything

else. Yet if I believe that Jesus really rose from the dead, and now can enter into a human being and that the risen Christ is here, and everything in His word tells me that here's a chance that the dead could come to life today. ...

... I've met guys in prison who say, 'Man, I met Jesus here and I would rather be locked in this cell for the rest of my life knowing Jesus than being out there, because out there, I didn't know him, I was blind,' and they've come to life here. And to think, that type of resurrection power can happen today? To sacrifice a few hours of my life to get to experience that moving of God, of course it's worth it.

#### IJ: Tell us about your involvement with prisoner reentry in San Francisco.

Francis: I'm currently helping with reentry in San Francisco. ... It was definitely a God thing. ... I was just walking down the street one day and a guy from a halfway house that was coming out pretty soon recognized me from having done a DVD series in prison. ... We started talking, and I started understanding his life and what it's like to try to get back into the world after seven years of being gone. Now he's got two kids that he's never fathered that are 7 and 8 now, and he's got a wife and then she was pregnant again, and so it's like, 'Wow I've got three kids, no job, nowhere to live,' and yet I saw the Holy Spirit in

this guy. ... I saw something in his eyes. I saw a joy on his face, and as terrified as he was of all the pressure out there and all the temptation, there was a sense of, 'No, Jesus is going to take care of me, and I just fell in love with this guy and said, 'You know what, I'm going to walk through this with you. You are my brother now.' ... I was able to get him an apartment and help him get a job, and now, two years later, he's a pastor. He's running my ministry in San Francisco, we got a whole house that is all about discipleship and getting guys that are coming out of prison and giving them just that little chance, getting them a job. ... I really believe that if we would just give some of these guys an opportunity, they're going to be amazing pastors and leaders.

### IJ: Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?

Francis: To those of you who are reading this Journal, [I would say,] believe that God can do the same things you read about in Scripture. ... I've seen it in people's lives, and God has always blessed and honored the person who believes in Him. It's all about faith. And the world's going to try to tell you, 'No, it can't happen,' or, 'You can't pull this off,' but it can happen, and so don't let anyone talk you out of what you read in [the Bible]. It happens today, and don't let Satan rob you of that faith. ■

### **Ohio Changes Policy on Solitary Confinement for Juveniles**

#### by Kate Campbell

hio will
drastically
reduce the
use of solitary
confinement

as a punishment for juveniles in its correctional system, with plans to eventually get rid of the practice altogether, according to a Department of Justice (DOJ) press release on May 21, 2014.

The DOJ issued an order for all Ohio correctional facilities to limit the length of solitary confinement for young prisoners and ensure that they receive proper mental health care. According to a report by news radio station WBUR, the order will limit seclusion punishments to four hours for Ohio prisoners ages 10-21, and will phase out the practice completely after time. The changes will begin September 1, 2014.

#### **Research Shows Effects** of Solitary Confinement

Research from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has shown that solitary confinement can be especially damaging to juveniles. Because mental health problems often cause behaviors that land kids in solitary confinement, the overuse of solitary confinement only continues the cycle. Representatives from the DOJ hope that this order will encourage correctional facilities to provide better mental health programs that address juvenile prisoners' mental health needs.

According to the press release, the DOJ began investigating the conditions of Ohio juvenile correctional facilities in 2007 and found many problems, including poor care for the mentally ill and excessive use of solitary confinement. The DOJ moved in 2008 to fix the violations, but data gathered in 2013 showed that Ohio prisons continued to rely too much on solitary confinement.

The DOJ gathered data from the all-male juvenile facilities in Ohio. Reports found that in the second half of 2013, 229 boys with mental health problems spent a total of 60,000 hours in solitary confinement. Many of the juveniles were experiencing suicidal thoughts or had

harmed themselves during their confinement.

### Remembering the Purpose of Solitary Confinement

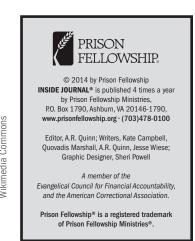
In spite of the downsides of solitary, it is sometimes necessary as a safety measure, and can be effective when used with limits and for a short time. Rick Raemisch, executive director

of the Colorado Department of Corrections, voluntarily spent 24 hours in solitary confinement in February 2014, just to know what it is like. In the op-ed article he wrote for The New York Times, Raemisch says that solitary confinement "allows a prison to run more efficiently for a period of time."

However, Raemisch empha-

Research has shown that excessive use of solitary confinement can have negative effects on incarcerated juveniles.

sizes that "by placing a difficult offender in isolation you have not solved the problem — only delayed or more likely exacerbated it." He says the role of correctional facilities is to protect the community by releasing people better than when they came into prison, not worse. With this in mind, other facilities are looking to change their policies about solitary confinement. Recently, correctional facilities in the state of New York banned the use of solitary confinement on prisoners under 18 and set up alternative programs for those with mental health conditions.



# PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS OUTPLE OUTPLE STATEMENT OF THE PRISONS OF THE PRISON FOR T

# A New Life for Jorge

#### by Kate Campbell

orge Garcia was just 13 years old his first time in a juvenile detention facility. For him, it was a badge of honor.

"It made me think I was cool," says Jorge. "But I was only a kid. I didn't know where all this was going to take me."

Jorge was born in Mexico but immigrated to San Diego with his family when he was 11. "I found out that it was a different language, a different culture," he remembers.

#### A Life of Crime Begins

In middle school, Jorge began stealing candy, bicycles, and clothing with his "kids' gang," and sniffing gasoline, paint, and glue. By 13, he was smoking marijuana. In high school, he began selling marijuana and pills, which made him very popular.

"I grew up with seven kids, so it was hard for me to get attention," he says. "I looked for that attention outside of my family."

Jorge's uncle opened the door to a life of crime when he convinced Jorge to become a drug trafficker. At 16, Jorge often made \$7,000 a day "working" for his uncle.

When he was 19, Jorge married his first wife, who didn't know about his criminal lifestyle.

"I knew I had to hide myself," he says. They had four kids and remained married for 18 years. Jorge spent much of that time in and out of prison, and he got tired of his life of crime.

"Deeply, I was not happy," he says.

#### **Becoming a Child of God**

In 1978, Jorge was invited to go to church.

"Before I went in [to church], I put my gun ... and my bag of cocaine under the dashboard," he says. The church was different than what Jorge had experienced before.

"People at this church were singing and clapping," he re-



After a life of crime, Jorge Garcia still spends a lot of his time behind bars—but not as a prisoner.

members. "The church where I used to go, everybody was quiet."

During a worship song, Jorge began to cry, and, for a brief moment, a hardened criminal was transformed into an innocent child again.

"It made an impact," he recalls. "I never cried like that day ... [but] I went back into my car and put my gun under my belt." Jorge continued his criminal lifestyle, spending more than two decades in and out of prisons in Mexico and America. In 1990, everything fell apart when

Continued on page 2

Photo provided by Jorge Garcia

# The Art of Looking Back

#### by Jim Liske

Jim Liske is the president and CEO of Prison Fellowship Ministries.

W

hen Chuck Colson, a native of Boston and a former captain in

the U.S. Marines, was invited to be special counsel to President Richard Nixon, he moved his things into an office looking over the White House lawn. Chuck, known for doing whatever it took to win, was at the high point of his success. I wonder what Grandpa would think of me now, he thought proudly.

Just a few years later, facing charges related to the Watergate scandal, Chuck packed up his office in disgrace. Looking over the White House lawn again, he thought grimly, What would Grandpa think if he could see me now?



Sometimes to move forward, you first have to look at the past.

#### **Repeating the Past**

We've all been in situations like Chuck's. Our mistakes catch up with us, and our apparent success goes up in smoke. When this happens, we have two choices: 1) We can ignore the past and try to start over, or 2) We can look carefully at the past and learn from it before moving ahead.

Often we choose Option 1. We make plans for becoming different, better versions of ourselves, without examining why we do the things we do.

We say things like, "Man, I shouldn't have had that last drink. I'm going to be late for work again. I hope I don't get fired. That's it. I'm going to be different. No more drinking for me—starting tomorrow."

Or, "I know my wife doesn't like my 'side business.' She's afraid I'll go back to prison. But we really need to move into a bigger place. Just one more big deal, and then I can leave it all

behind for good."

Speeches like the ones above are "famous last words." Sadly, just having good intentions rarely leads to a changed life. Why?

#### **Look in the Rearview Mirror**

Maybe you've heard the old saying, "Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it." That's true in our personal lives. If we try to fix our bad choices, without ever looking at why we made bad choices in the first place, we're not going to be successful.

If we're serious about changing our direction in life, it's not enough to be sorry. We need to take a good, long look in the rearview mirror.

• Examine the past. Are things from your past driving your present actions? Have you used alcohol, drugs, or toxic relationships to numb the pain of something bad that happened? Being reminded of a painful

Continued on page 2

# Letters to the Editor

#### 'Roy's Long Road'

I was laying on my bunk and this old man came up to my cell door and asked me if I wanted something to read. I got up and started talking to him, and my heart went out to this man in his 80s named Dave. He slid the Inside Journal Prison Fellowship's newspaper for America's prisons, Volume 23. No. 2, Spring 2014 under my cell door and told me, "You read that and you will find some answers." I read that newspaper three times and was touched emotionally by all of the articles. 'Roy's Long Road to Paradise' is a little like my story.

- C.C., Tennessee

#### **Prisoner Wages**

During my times inside I have noticed the cost of items increase multiple times while inmate worker wages have stayed the same. Both state and federal minimum wages have risen multiple times as well. But who cares about the hard-working inmate population? [...] It is way past time for a change. It is way past time for a raise. It is way past time for respect.

- M.P., Connecticut

#### **Getting in the Christmas Spirit**

Dear Angel Tree, I want to thank you for giving my children ... gifts on my behalf. My daughter wrote me and told me that you have



been doing this for years. [...] I wanted to thank you for your love and concern for my two children. [...] I will be eligible for early release next April 2015 and I will be moving to a [transitional living facility]. When I get established, I want to help in your program to give to all who are incarcerated with children. Have a memorable Christmas just like mine. Thank you for your prayers and love!

- R.S., Ohio

#### **Vegan Food**

I am a vegan. It is not healthy or logical in the year 2014 to eat products from animal-based foods. [...] The problem is that the DOC does not offer any meals that are strictly plant-based. The DOC does not even offer a vegetarian diet. On average, the DOC serves four ounces of ½ cup of vegetables about four days out of seven. [...] The DOC commissary is an option, however, the only plant-based products that the DOC sells are peanuts, black beans, pickles, trail mix, and popcorn. One cannot create a normal plant-based diet on what the DOC provides. [...] If a person wants to be a Muslim, the DOC provides a non-meat-based diet. It is sad that the DOC will not honor my spiritual decision of wanting only a plant-based diet.

- K.M., Connecticut

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#### **Subscription Info**

At Inside Journal® (IJ), we receive many letters each week from prisoners asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers – however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is *only* available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

#### Art of Looking Back Continued from page 1

event can trigger an explosion of bad choices, like stepping on a land mine. It will be hard to stop engaging in addictive behaviors until you deal with the pain head-on. That might mean journaling about your experiences or joining an addiction support group. You can't change the past, but you can choose what you do about it now.

- **Examine your worldview.** We all have a worldview, or way of thinking, that drives how we act. If you think money is the most important thing in life, you will worry about having enough, and you might break the rules to get more. If status is the most important thing to you, you will do whatever it takes to be on top. Ask yourself what thoughts might have led up to decisions that you now regret, and what thoughts you want to embrace instead. If you're a Christian, search the Bible (Proverbs and the New Testament are great places to start) for principles worth building your new worldview on.
- Examine your relationships. We don't make decisions in a vacuum. Sometimes the people around us encourage us to make bad decisions, and sometimes our bad decisions hurt others. Before we can be ready to move forward, we might need to choose to surround ourselves with more positive influences. We might also need to apologize to others for

the pain we have caused, and do whatever is in our power to make up for our past actions.

Repentance is a lot more

You can't change the past, but you can choose what you do about it now.

than feeling sorry for something we've done wrong and promising to do better. It's an "aboutface," a total change of direction in the way we think and act. It's a revolution of the heart.

As he took a hard look back at his own life, Chuck Colson realized that his worldview was built on the wrong priorities. He valued power and winning instead of humility and serving others. When he had a personal encounter with God, the whole direction of his life changed. He pled guilty to charges that he knew were true and agreed to serve time in a federal prison camp. When he came out, he dedicated the rest of his life to serving prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families, and helping others develop a healthy worldview.

It's not always easy or flattering, but finding a new life starts with looking hard at your old one. Once you have looked back, you will be better prepared to leave the past behind for good.

#### A New Life for Jorge Continued from page 1

his wife asked for a divorce. He tried to repair the damage, even seeking help from a woman who practiced witchcraft. While his family crumbled, the rest of his life began to crumble, too.

"I started losing everything one by one," says Jorge. With no house and no car, Jorge lived in his brother's garage and rode the public bus.

"I didn't even have \$5 to buy a hamburger," he says.

Jorge soon decided his life wasn't worth living. While lying on the couch he used for a bed, he attempted to kill himself by overdosing on drugs, but his friends found him and brought him back to life. All he said to

"Before I
went in [to
church], I put
my gun ...
and my bag
of cocaine
under the
dashboard."



A church service first broke down Jorge's defenses, and it's where he eventually turned his back on a life of crime.

them was, "Why did you bring me back? I wanted to die."

His second attempt to overdose was also unsuccessful; a police officer found him in a park and took him to the hospital. Feeling like a failure, Jorge thought, I'm not even good enough to kill myself.

That's when he prayed: "O.K., God, I want to go Your way."

Jorge remembered the church from 12 years earlier and decided to go back again.

"That church had something special that I never felt before," he says.

When he returned, he found lasting peace for the first time since he started using and selling drugs as a kid.

"I was tired, and that's what made a criminal become a child of God." That day, Jorge gave his life to Christ.

#### A Life Redeemed

After he became a Christian, Jorge left California and spent five years on a farm in Mexico. "It was like therapy. God changed me little by little," he says. "He had a mission for me." When Jorge returned in 1996, he began working in Los Angeles and volunteering with Prison Fellowship. In 2003 he became Prison Fellowship's Hispanic ministry coordinator.

Through his new position and faith in Jesus Christ, Jorge discovered his God-given gifts and talents.

"I thought that [selling drugs] was the only thing I knew how to do," he says. "But I discovered I know how to love my people behind bars ... I discovered that I have a lot of talents that I never knew I had."

Jorge remarried and now has another child and a grandchild. He directs Prison Fellowship's work in Latin America and Mexico, and also produces "Libres en Cristo," a Spanish-language radio program that airs regularly on Radio Nueva Vida.

His life story is a message of God's transformative power. "If I had known what I know now when I was a kid, I would have chosen God when I was a kid," he says. "But God gave me the opportunity ... to show what God has done in me."

# PRAYER WARRIORS CORNER

#### This fall, please pray for the following concerns:

- Pray for all those who are behind bars in this country and around the world, whether they are being imprisoned justly or unjustly.
- "Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." Hebrews 13:3
- Pray for Christians, as well as other religious minorities in the Middle East, who are being forced to flee their homes as they are persecuted for their beliefs in the Middle East. Tens of thousands of Christians around the world are committed to praying for this special concern every Monday.

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."
- Ephesians 6:18

- Pray that the Lord would continue to reveal Himself to those who don't know Him and comfort the families whose loved ones are incarcerated.
- "Pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you." 2 Thessalonians 3:1

# **Good Behavior Counts, Right?**

#### by Johnathan Kana

stared excitedly at the folded slip of paper the officer had just handed me. At that moment, it was the single most important thing in the world to me.

It was my first parole decision. I felt good about the release plan I'd filed with the board. I had a safe place to live, excellent job leads, and a strong support network. Over a dozen upstanding members of my home community had written letters on my behalf, and I'd voluntarily completed several self-improvement courses behind bars. What more could they possibly want?

"Get this guy out of here," I

imagined them saying. "Let's make room for someone who really needs to be here." Already dreaming of what I'd do the first day I was out, I eagerly unfolded the notice.

Moments later, I wished I hadn't.

"The parole panel assigned to review your case has determined that, in light of the nature and circumstances of your offense ..." I didn't need to read any further to know I wasn't going home. I'd never felt so heartbroken in my whole life.

#### **Worse Than a Set-Off**

It was my first parole set-off, but it wouldn't be my last. In the months that followed, I slavishly followed all the warden's rules,

Nothing Johnathan did seemed to make his parole date arrive any faster. He realized there was nothing he could do to earn his freedom—or his salvation. But there was still hope.

trying to keep a clean disciplinary record. They say good behavior counts, after all. But as I watched others receive similar set-offs time and time again, I began to lose hope. It became clear that my crime would always be the first and most important thing the parole board considered, and nothing I said or did behind bars would ever change "the nature and circumstances of my offense."

After my second set-off, cold reality set in: I would never deserve to be set free until I had fully served my time, all the way down to the last day.

The same is true for all of us when it comes to our standing before God. The Bible says, "When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned" (Romans 5:12 NLT). A lot of us think we can be saved from our sins by going to church and doing our best to follow God's rules. We think that our good deeds will somehow cancel out past mistakes, and so we do our best to simply be "good people."

But that's not how God judges. The Bible says, "The person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as the person who has broken all of God's laws" (James 2:10 NLT). That means anything we think, say or do that falls short of God's perfect standard makes us eternally guilty before Him—and nothing we say or do afterward can erase that guilt. When our cases come up for review, those past misdeeds will still be on our records, and we'll still have to answer for them.

#### **Better Than Parole**

Because He created us and loves us, God has provided a way to wipe those blots away, but it

#### **No Revocation Hearings**

Parole comes with conditions, and it can be taken away for misbehavior. God's mercy isn't like that. His grace has no strings attached, and He'll never summon you to a revocation hearing.

You can't earn that kind of love, but if you're willing to confess your sins and invite Jesus into your life, you can receive it right now as His free gift. You can start with a simple prayer like this one:

God, I've tried so hard to run away from my sin, but I can't. I don't deserve Your love, and yet I know You still do love me. I believe You sent Your Son Jesus to die on the cross for my sins, and today I ask You to come into my life and set me free for His sake. Help me live in a way that honors Your love.

If you just prayed those words from a sincere heart, then you're on the road to a new life, and Inside Journal wants to help. You can enroll in a free correspondence Bible study—and get a Bible, if you don't have access to one through your facility—by writing to "No Revocation," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA, 20146-1790. We will connect you with a partnering organization that provides these materials.

has nothing to do with our merits. "He saved us," the Bible says, "not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy" (Titus 3:5).

God knew that once His perfect justice was served, we would all perish. That's why He allowed His own Son to become one of us. Jesus Christ, being God in human flesh, lived the perfect life none of us ever could; yet He was also destined to die at the hands of the very people He came to save. Nailed to a Roman cross like a common criminal, He submitted to a punishment He didn't deserve so that God could extend us the mercy we don't deserve. At the cross, God exhausted His wrath against our sin, and then He raised Jesus from the dead three days later to demonstrate that death no longer has any claim on us.

Whenever I think about that,

I'm reminded of how I felt the day I passed through those prison gates, having served less than half my sentence before making parole, despite the set-offs. With only an empty street to keep me from being reunited with my family, I felt nothing but profound gratitude for the unmerited favor I had received from the parole board that day. I may have been a good candidate for early release, but I still didn't deserve the privilege. I also knew there would be strict rules to follow on parole, but I was so thankful that it didn't matter.

That's how I still feel as I strive each day to live in a way that honors the God who went to such extraordinary measures to save me from my sins. It's a privilege to serve Jesus, because in Him I have something far better than parole. My case has been wholly expunged.

3

### Doing HIS Time: Meditations and Prayers for Men and Women in Prison

By James C. Vogelzang with Lynn Vanderzalm Revised Edition with Study Guides

#### **Doing HIS Time**

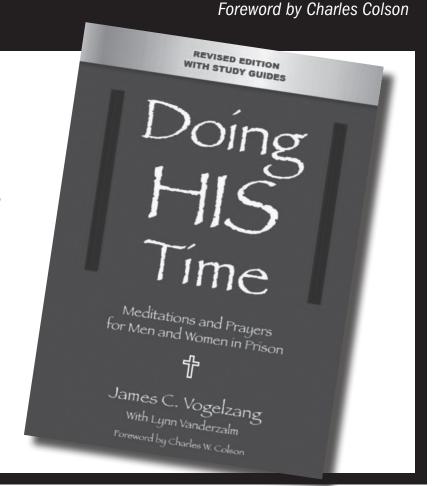
is a daily devotional that brings the Gospel of Jesus to you in your language, in your "real-life" situations.

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# **Great Prisoners of the Bible**

In honor of Inside Journal's 25th anniversary, we'll re-run some classic content from the last quarter century in each of the next four editions. We hope you enjoy!

#### **Apostle Paul: From Jailer** to Jailbird

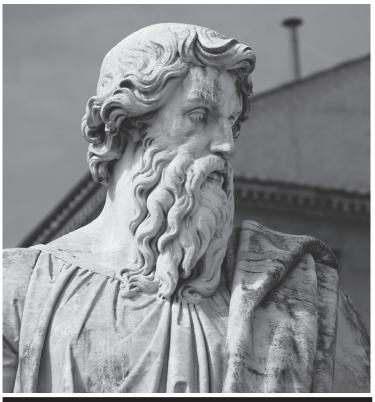
hroughout history, many people have found themselves on the inside looking out. Paul, one of the dominant personalities of the New Testament, was one. We read Paul's story in Acts 7:58-28:31 and throughout the many New Testament books he wrote. Most of those books were letters he wrote to young churches. They contain excellent teaching on how to grow as a Christian. Of the 27 documents that make up the New Testament, Paul wrote 13 of them. Luke and Acts were written by a doctor who was Paul's friend.

#### **Paul the Enforcer**

When we first meet Paul in Acts 7:58, he is vigorously persecuting Christians.

Questions for personal or group study:

- What was his attitude toward the stoning of Stephen?
- What else was he doing to make life rough for Christians?
- Why do you think he hated them so much?
- Have you ever hated someone that intensely?



Paul was one of the greatest enemies—and later one of the greatest champions—of the early Christian movement.

#### **A Dramatic Turnaround**

Something incredibly dramatic happened to Paul (who was previously called Saul) one day. Luke gives the historical account of it in Acts 9. Paul talks about it in Acts 22 and Acts 26. Questions for personal or group study:

- Describe, in your own words, what happened to Paul that day.
- Was he any different after that? In what way?
- How did he view God's working in his life? (Galatians 1:15-17)
- What has been the most

dramatic turning point in your life so far?

#### **Paul the Repeat Offender**

Now Paul, the persecutor of Christians, began to receive some of his own medicine. We learn in 2 Corinthians 6:4-5 and 11:23-28 that he was in prison many times. The book of Acts records at least three. Other early church documents record at least 7 times that he was in jail, in prison, or under house arrest. He once spent two years under a soldier's guard and bound with a light chain (Acts 28:16, 20). From the book of 2 Timothy

it appears that the last time he was imprisoned without hope of release. He was executed at Rome in A.D. 66 or early 67. Questions for personal or group study:

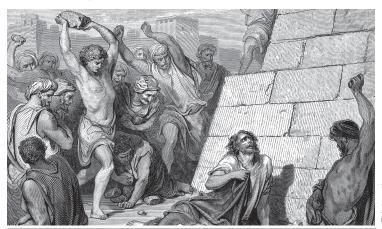
- For what kinds of offenses was Paul imprisoned? You'll find some of the account in Acts 16:23 and chapters 23 28.
- A particularly dramatic prison event is recorded in Acts 16:22-40. How were Paul and Silas (his ministry partner) spending their time in prison?
- Why was the jailer about to commit suicide?
- What happened to him instead?
- What impact might how you spend your prison time have on those around you?

#### Lessons From the Life of Paul

We know more about Paul than almost any other person

described in the New Testament. We can learn a lot from him about what it means to live a purposeful, meaningful life. Questions for personal or group study:

- Paul often referred to his Acts 9 experience as the start of his new life in Christ (1 Corinthians 9:1). At the center of his vision was Jesus Christ. New life begins with a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Have you met Him as Paul did?
- How did Paul use his various prison stints productively?
   What could you do to improve the productivity of your time behind bars?
- Paul was sometimes imprisoned unjustly. Often he had difficult conditions. But he tells us in Philippians 4:11-13 what his attitude was toward it all. This is a good model for all of us. What would it take to have that kind of attitude every day?



Paul oversaw the public execution of Stephen, an early follower of Jesus. Eventually Paul would be jailed and executed for his own faith.

### **Prison Food—From Field to Chow Hall**

#### by Kate Campbell

he Richard J.
Donovan Correctional Facility in
San Diego recently
launched its new
Farm and Rehabilitation Meals
(FARM) program, in which prisoners work as farmers and learn sustainable agriculture, according to The Huffington Post.

To accommodate 20 prisoner-farmers, Donovan Correctional Facility is building farming facilities, including three acres of farmland on prison grounds, a classroom, and several raised garden beds to serve prisoners in wheelchairs. Their produce will be served in prison cafeterias after undergoing an approval process by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Program, a nonprofit organization that promotes gardening and farming education, is partnering with the health department at Donovan to coordinate this program.

"It's kind of a grand experi-

ment for all of us. We've never done anything like this before," says Richard Winkler, who is on the board of directors for San Diego Roots and volunteers to help run FARM.

"For me, this is sort of a big opportunity to demonstrate what's possible," says Richard. "It seems to me that [farming] is a basic skill that I think everybody should know."

#### **Getting Back to the Roots**

In the first class, the prisoners will start by growing summer vegetables, including tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and squash.

"We teach them how to do everything from irrigation to growing healthy soil [to] what you need to know to grow food," says Richard. The program will also teach prisoners about good nutrition.

The program was created in response to a study conducted at facilities with similar programs, which demonstrated that prisoners involved with the farming program had a recidi-

vism rate of only 5 to 10 percent, compared with California's overall rate of 61 percent.

#### **Potential for Growth**

Wehtahnah Tucker, health care administrator and FARM program coordinator, hopes that the program will be able to provide certification for participants, so prisoners can more easily find jobs in the sustainable agriculture industry, especially in San Diego,

where farming skills are in high demand. Wehtahnah has been working alongside Elizabeth Gransee, information officer at California Correctional Health Care Services. They hope to one day expand FARM into a statewide initiative.

"My expectation is that this curriculum will be successful in teaching inmates ... not only at Donovan, but statewide," says Wehtahnah. "When we start out projects that are innovative like

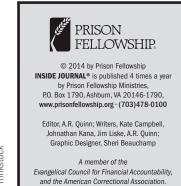
this one, we start on a small scale and we see where it takes us."

Richard hopes that the program expands beyond the half acre set aside for its launch. "There's a huge potential to grow food and have an outdoor recreational activity," says Richard.

As for prisoners entering the application process to be a part of this program, Wehtahnah says, "We're looking for the inmate who wants this, who is motivated to learn and to take that knowledge and share it with others."



A new prison agriculture program in California may bring fresher, healthier food and marketable skills to prisoners.



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# PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS OUT TO SUMME 24, NO. 1 WINTER 2015

# A Light Shines in the Dark

by A.R. Quinn

ONG BEACH,
Calif. – Audrey Fay
isn't sure what
prevented her from
committing suicide.

"I had traveled a long, lonely road," she remembers. Trying to hide the anger and pain she felt, she focused on pleasing the people around her. She did everything that was asked of her, hoping others' approval would fill the emptiness inside.

"Instead," she says, "it almost drove me off a cliff."

Audrey began embezzling money from her employer so that she could meet the expectations she felt from her family, co-workers, and friends. She lived a lie, trapped in the web of her own deceit. She became deeply depressed and thought about taking her own life. When she couldn't take the strain anymore, she walked into her boss' office and told him what she had done.

"They say the truth sets you



When her web of lies started to close in on her, Audrey Fay thought about suicide as a way of escape. But God gave her another way out.

free, and it does," reflects Audrey, "but first I had to go prison."

#### Six Days in the Dark

Under a plea agreement, she was sentenced to a two-

year term of which she did 13 months. From the county jail, she was sent to Valley State Prison, which at the time was a women's prison—in central California—just days before

Thanksgiving 2004. She had never been to prison before. On her first night, her cellmate was sent to the hospital with a sudden illness. Then someone down the hall tried to light a cigarette

and blew a circuit. The entire unit sat in the dark while rain poured down outside. Audrey sat in her unlit room for six long days and nights. She was alone, except for the rat that scurried in and out.

The only things in Audrey's room were a Bible and a Prison Fellowship pamphlet explaining God's plan of forgiveness. She picked them up and began to read. Her internal conflict built. She wanted to know God, but she had questions.

On the sixth night, she called out to God. She asked Him to save her from the life she was leading and take her as His child. She even prayed that He would make the lights come back on, and that the rat would disappear.

The next day, the lights finally came back on, and she never saw the rat again. It was then that she knew that God had heard her, and she would never be the same person.

Upon her release in 2005,

Continued on page 2

# Lessons from a Lifer

by Sidney Deloch Jr.

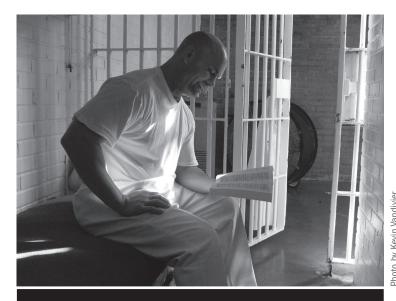
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orn and raised in the bayou town of Plaquemine, Louisiana, I thought I had

a good life with a family, a home, and a job with the U.S. Army Corps. But in 1978, I was arrested and convicted for rape. My conviction carried a mandatory sentence of life in prison without parole.

As the judge pronounced the sentence, I stood there stunned. I had never been to prison before, and at age 28, my life seemed to be over. Despairing thoughts flooded my mind as I considered the fact that I would die in prison, never again to be a husband or a father. While I stayed numb and speechless, I heard someone say that I was "trying to be strong." If they only knew; I had no strength at all.

Afterward, reality set in. I



You are more than the sum of your worst mistakes—or the length of your sentence.

was going to Angola, then the bloodiest prison in the country. I wondered if I would have to kill or be killed, but since I would spend the rest of my natural life in prison anyway, it didn't seem to matter.

I felt hopeless. When you have an out date, you can look

forward to the future and make some plans. Even if you have a long sentence, there is always the possibility of getting it shortened. But how could I hope when there was nothing to hope for?

#### **Let Time Serve You**

For the first couple of years,

I just existed day to day. But one day I saw a sign in the education department that read, "Don't serve time; let time serve you." That was an "ah-ha" moment, and it was then that I began to take note of what the prison environment was doing to me. I knew I was better than what I was becoming.

I was raised in a religious family, but I didn't want to know a God who would let this happen to me. All around me, I saw people who had jailhouse religion and were pretending to be holy, but were living even worse lives than I.

One day an old prisoner came up to me and asked me to come to a church service with him. At that time I was so lost and confused that I agreed. Something happened to me at that service, and my heart began to change. The old convict who had brought me looked me in the eyes and said, "No matter what people might say about

you, you have worth. So don't ever give up. You must build the life you have always desired, or as close as you can to that life."

#### Freedom from Bitterness

He encouraged me to read, study, and grow. My life was not over just because a judge said it was. He told me I could still be the man I was meant to be, but to become that person, I needed to cleanse myself of bitterness. Until my mind and heart were free, my soul would never be free to face the challenges of prison life.

There were so many seemingly helpless, hopeless people in prison. At last I realized what I wanted to do: help others who were tempted to give up. In June 1980 I surrendered my heart to Christ and began to study His Word. I visited the sick at the prison hospital and began talking to anyone who would listen about this new life I had found behind the barbed-

Continued on page 2

# **Taking the Hill**

#### Guest Column: Jim Liske

Sometimes it becomes crystal clear why I do what I do. I had one of those moments of extraordinary clarity one Sunday last October as I forced my aching feet up Heartbreak Hill at the finish line of the Marine Corps Marathon.

I had run the marathon in honor of the many veterans-including many readers of *Inside* Journal-who are behind bars. I prayed for a different incarcerated Marine during each mile of the race. Their names were written on my T-shirt. Many active-duty Marines working at the race thanked Prison Fellowship on behalf of buddies who came home from war scarred, perhaps by post-traumatic stress disorder or a traumatic brain injury, trying to numb their wounded souls with drugs and alcohol. They thanked us for simply standing beside a group that society prefers to ignore.

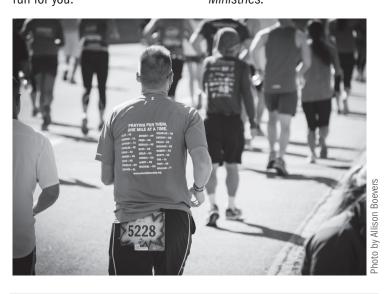
The finish line was at the base of the Iwo Jima Memorial. As I saw it, a moving tribute to thousands who were wounded and killed to take a hill out of enemy hands, my brief pain on Heartbreak Hill was put into perspective. I thought of

Calvary, the hill that Jesus took at the cost of His own life. As men and women have died to give us liberty on this side of the grave, Jesus suffered agony to give us liberty that will last for all eternity.

If you've served our country in uniform, thank you! It was my honor to pray for you and run for you.

Are you an incarcerated veteran? What do you think is the biggest thing our society can do to support returning veterans? Send your opinion to: Editorial Staff, *Inside Journal*, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790.

Jim Liske is the president and CEO of Prison Fellowship Ministries.



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#### **Lessons from a Lifer** *Continued from page 1*

wire fences. By 1982, I had matured in my faith and began teaching the Bible to others.

A few years later, my mom came to visit me. She told me she was proud of the person I had become. I could see in her eyes that she meant every word. Her expression of love and faith in me was so moving that I began to apologize to her for all the wrong I had ever done. It was so unburdening.

My mom came to visit me.
She told me she was proud of the person I had become.

#### A New Life for a New Person

After that day I started getting involved in every self-help program the prison had to offer. I was a new person, and I had to do new things. On Oct. 12, 1985, I received a call into the ministry to preach the Gospel of Jesus. In 1990 the prisoner church elected me as its pastor, a position in which I still serve.

About five years ago, as a way to reduce recidivism, enhance public safety, and create fewer victims, the Department of Corrections and Warden Burl Cain were finally able to establish a reentry program that used Angola's lifers and long-termers to teach and mentor short-term prisoners in both vocational training and life skills with an emphasis on moral rehabilitation.

In June 2010, Warden Cain selected me to be the lead mentor and coordinator of the Corrections Court Reentry Program, a pilot program established in New Orleans that has since spread to seven other Louisiana parishes. Working with young men, many of whom have never had a real chance in life, has been my most rewarding experience. The mentors and tutors are helping to make society safer.

After almost 36 years of incarceration, I am no longer angry or bitter with anyone for any reason. I believe that God has given me another chance to be a good father. He has restored my relationship with my own children, and now I have so many more "kids" behind bars who call me "Pops."

I've learned that because you have committed a criminal act you do not have to become a criminal. Even inside prison you do not have to waste away. You can grow where you are planted and be fruitful. The simple truth is that if you water yourself and fertilize your mind by doing good, you will become good and find joy in yourself and in the God who gives you all you need.

#### A Light Shines in the Dark Continued from page 1

Audrey went home to her husband, Jeff, who had also become a Christian. They started attending church together and volunteering in their local community.

#### A New Life Path

While Audrey was in prison, Jeff visited her regularly. Whenever he sat in the visiting room, he was moved with compassion for the other women, most of whom never received visitors.

"Someone has to go to them," he said. So after Audrey was released, he got involved with Prison Fellowship's in-prison ministry, volunteering on Friday nights at Pleasant Valley State

"They say the truth sets you free, and it does," reflects Audrey, "but first I had to go prison."



Audrey and her husband, Jeff, learned new ways of relating to each other after she was arrested.

Prison in Corcoran, California. But Audrey wasn't ready to go back into the prison environment.

In March 2007, Jeff was transferred to Los Angeles for his job, and Audrey came with him, continuing to work for the same commercial real estate broker who had employed her during the work-release phase of her incarceration.

In December 2008, Jeff and Audrey delivered a Christmas gift to a prisoner's family through Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program. Though she had always hesitated to share her own prison experiences, Audrey knew she had to comfort the family. Her story seemed to come pouring out. As she felt the freedom to talk about the past, she knew it was time to face her other biggest fear.

As they pulled away from the curb she asked Jeff, "Are you ready?"

"For what?" he said.

"For how God is going to move us this coming year," she replied.

"I don't want to move—I like it here," her confused spouse responded.

"Not physically!" Audrey said. "Spiritually. God is calling us to do prison ministry together."

Jeff used to be a race car driver, and he tends to drive quickly, but he was so excited that he stopped the car in the middle of the road. He turned to Audrey and said, "Look where we are."

They were right in front of the California Rehabilitation Center (CRC), a prison for men.

#### Ready to Face the Past

Jeff and Audrey began to go into prison together in 2009. They volunteered for The Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI), a Prison Fellowship multi-year, seminary-level program that equips prisoners to become Christian leaders behind bars and back in their communities after they are released. The growth of TUMI at CRC allowed for another class to open, and Jeff and Audrey began facilitating their own class in

November 2009.

Audrey joined the staff of Prison Fellowship in 2012 and is now the organization's field director in Southern California. Though she once resisted the idea of going back into prison, she now spends all her time helping men and women behind bars find the same hope she discovered in a dark cell.

Audrey says, "As I accepted Christ's forgiveness and learned to forgive myself, I stopped looking to other people to make me feel loved and valued. Instead, God's love has enabled me to truly start focusing on others and what I can do for them. As Jeff and I serve together, every blessing we pour out comes back to us 100-fold."

# PRAYER WARRIORS CORNER



This winter, please pray for the following concerns:

- Pray for all those who are in authority, including wardens, corrections officers, parole and probation officers, and the parole board. Ask God that "they may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." (1 Timothy 2:2-3)
- Pray for the peace and health of the jail or prison you are in, and all the prisons in your state.
- Pick three people in your prison and commit to praying for their personal and spiritual needs at a specific time during the day. Pray especially that they would come to know forgiveness in Jesus.

### **Ex-POW: 'Love Replaced the Hate I Had'**

by A.R. Quinn

t first glance, Louis Zamperini didn't seem like a kid with a future. Growing up in Torrance, California, as the child of Italian immigrants, he was always

in trouble with local law enforcement, whether it was for fighting, drinking, or hopping onto freight cars. He was angry, rebellious, and liked to take risks.

But young Zamperini found a passion that kept him out of mischief: track. Trained by his older brother, he became the best high school runner in the country. He set a new national interscholastic record by running a mile in a little over four minutes. At age 18 he qualified for and competed in the 1936 Olympic Games in Germany.

Before World War II, Zamperini joined the U.S. Army Air Force. He was stationed in the Pacific as a second lieutenant, serving as a master bombardier aboard B-24 bombers. One day, he and his

Enroll Today!

crew were asked to go look for a missing plane. Their own plane crashed into the ocean. Of the 11 crew members, only Zamperini and two others survived. They spent more than 40 days floating on a raft, drinking rain water and eating raw fish and seabirds, until they were picked up by Japanese forces and imprisoned on the Marshall Islands.

#### **Tortured in POW Camp**

Until the end of the war, the Japanese held Zamperini as a prisoner. His family believed that he had been killed in action. He was terribly mistreated, in violation of international law protecting captured combatants. To avoid starvation, he had to eat rice that had been thrown on the ground and mixed with dirt. He was mocked and forced to run a race against well-fed Japanese soldiers.

Worst of all, he caught the attention of the moody, sadistic camp commander Mutsuhiro Watanabe, whom the prisoners

had nicknamed "the Bird." The Bird hated Zamperini because he had been an Olympic athlete; he wanted to humiliate him, so he would order Zamperini to stand at attention while he beat him viciously. Once, he forced Zamperini to hold a heavy hardwood beam over his head for 37 minutes straight, until finally, enraged by the prisoner's endurance, the commander punched Zamperini in the stomach. Zamperini dropped the beam and it hit him in the head, knocking him unconscious.

When the war was over, Zamperini and the other imprisoned Americans were released. The Bird went into hiding to avoid prosecution for war crimes. Zamperini slowly made his way home to his family, resting and regaining his strength along the way. He met and married the beautiful Cynthia Applewhite, and he enjoyed the attention and awards he received because of his incredible story of survival.

But inside, Zamperini carried terrible scars that no one could see. He had horrible nightmares about the mistreatment he had endured, and he would wake up sweating and shaking with terror. When he mistakenly thought he heard the Japanese word for "salute," he would reflexively snap to attention, ready to receive a beating. For a while, he became obsessed with the idea of hunting down the Bird and murdering him. He became angry and sullen, and as he had during childhood, he turned to liquor to help dull the intolerable emotional pain he felt. His wife felt she had no choice but to divorce him.

Zamperini's life began to change

#### **Letting Go, Letting God**

The pain of the past can be like a heavy chain around your ankles, weighing you down with every step you take. You can carry it around with you your whole life, or you can ask God to give you a new start as you commit your life to Him. You can start with a simple prayer like the one below. The words can be your own; what matters is that you talk to God openly and sincerely from your heart. He will never reject an honest prayer from someone who admits they need Him.

Dear God, I'm a broken person. I'm tired of carrying around all the pain of the past—pain from the things I've done and what's been done to me. I want a new start. I want to experience Your love, forgiveness, and redemption. Please show me how to live a life committed to You.

If, like Louis Zamperini, you're ready to let go of the past and let God take charge of your life, *Inside Journal* wants to help. We will connect you with a partner organization that can provide a free correspondence Bible study, as well as a Bible if you do not have access to one through your facility. Write to "Letting Go," c/o Inside Journal, PO Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790.

when some neighbors invited him and Cynthia to an event in California where Billy Graham, the famous evangelist, was preaching. He went reluctantly, but the message of God's forgiveness and salvation transformed his life forever. He felt able to let go of the past.

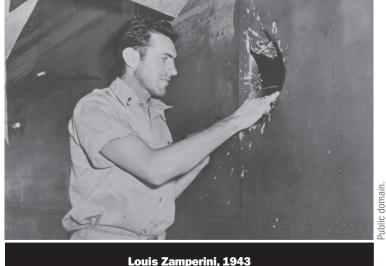
#### 'Forgive Your Enemies'

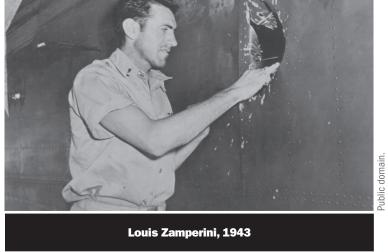
In 1950, he returned to Japan as a missionary. He sought out the camp guards who had imprisoned him and told them that he forgave them. He became reconciled to them and told them about the love of Jesus. The only one who refused to meet with him was the Bird.

Zamperini wrote a letter which he asked to be delivered to Watanabe. It said, in part, "As a result of my prisoner of war experience under your unwarranted and

unreasonable punishment, my post-war life became a nightmare. [...] but thanks to a confrontation with God through the evangelist Billy Graham, I committed my life to Christ. Love replaced the hate I had for you. Christ said, 'Forgive your enemies and pray for them.' [...] I also forgave you and now would hope that you would also become a Christian."

Zamperini and his wife had two children. His war-ravaged body would not respond to training in the same way it had before, and he never competed athletically again, but near his 81st birthday, he carried the Olympic torch in Japan. His life story was made into *Unbroken*, a best-selling book by nonfiction author Laura Hillenbrand, and a 2014 Hollywood film of the same name, directed by Angelina Jolie.







#### **Free Bible Correspondence Courses in English and Spanish**

- Receive lessons in the mail.
- Earn certificates of completion for each course.
- Build spiritual strength, character, and endurance.
- Receive personalized comments and encouragement.
- Trained volunteers review and respond to each lesson.
- Upon completing the self-paced 35 lessons, the student may earn 6 credit hours at Berean Bible Institute, in Slinger, Wisconsin. www.Bereanbibleinstitute.org

In the last 14 years, over 20,000 students have taken our courses. Here is what one prisoner said:

"While here in prison, a cellmate asked me if I would like to do a Bible Correspondence course. 'Why not,' I told him. One of your courses in particular was Works vs. Grace. When I finished it, I understood for the first time the Grace of God. The Holy Spirit opened my eyes and I opened my heart to Him, deciding to follow Jesus. Now I understand the love of God. I would like to study the Bible more, possibly taking college courses. I want to learn more in order to teach others about grace and the peace found in our Lord."

- Edward (He took our Spanish courses.)

This year we celebrate 60 years of prison ministry and outreach from 1955-2015. You can download all our lessons at www.prisonmission.org



Please enroll by writing us at the address above, and be sure to include:

- Your name and ID#
- **Institution Name**
- **Institution Address**
- City, State, ZIP
- Specify English or Spanish

# The Bible: Plugging into the Source

In celebration of 25 years in print, we are running classic content from some of our earlier editions. The article below first appeared in the summer of 1994. Enjoy!

o use an electric fan, stereo, or other electrical device, you have to plug it into the wall socket. An unplugged device is lifeless and can't do what it was designed for.

Reading the Bible is like plugging into the power source. It's the direct connection to how God designed us to live. The Bible is God's way of letting humankind know who He is, how He feels about us, what He offers, and what He wants from us.

The Bible is a big book and can be difficult to get through. Maybe you've tried to read it and have given up. This article provides a quick-start guide to the Bible-advice on how to get in, how to get started, and how to get some immediate good out of this amazing book.

#### A Book of Many Books

The Bible is actually a whole library of books and letters written over thousands of years. There are 66 in all, arranged in two major groups. The Old Testament (39 books) focuses on history before the birth of Jesus Christ. It contains:

- 17 historical books
- 5 books of poetry
- 17 books of prophecy

The New Testament (27 books) begins with the life of Jesus Christ. It gives practical instructions for living the Christian

life and talks about the future. The New Testament has:

- 4 gospels (gospel = "good
- Acts of the apostles (history of the early church)
- 21 epistles (letters to individuals or churches)
- Revelation

#### Who Wrote the Bible?

Although the Bible is literally the Word of God, He used humans to write it down. Their personalities and styles show through. The 66 books were written by about 40 authors, including two kings, two priests, a doctor, two fishermen, and two shepherds. Other authors include a statesman, a tax collector, a soldier, a butler, and a variety of others. They wrote in the wilderness, in prison, in palaces, and from exile. They wrote during wartime and peacetime over a period of 1,600 years.

To see what God says about the authorship of His book, read 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; and Isaiah 55:10-11.

(A tip for beginners: Bibles usually have a table of contents in the first few pages that tells you which book starts on which page. When you look up a reference, the chapter is listed first, and the verses are listed after. For example, Isaiah 55:10-11 is telling you to look up the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament and search for the 55th chapter, verses 10 and 11.)

#### Why Should I Read the Bible?

Look up the following Scripture verses. After each reference, jot down one main reason for

reading the Bible:

- John 5:39
- Hebrews 4:12
- Proverbs 6:22-23
- Joshua 1:8
- Romans 10:17

If you do not have much acquaintance with the Bible, a good place to begin is the Gospel of Mark in the New Testament. The Old Testament book of Proverbs also gives excellent advice for practical living. Stay away (for a while) from tougher books like Leviticus, Daniel, or Revelation. You can study them when you have more background.

There are many versions of the Bible. Among the most difficult to read and understand are the King James Version and the New American Standard. Although many people prefer it because it feels familiar, the King James Version was first used hundreds of years ago, and it contains many words and phrases that we no longer use today in modern English.

Some of the easier and more widespread contemporary versions are the New International Version, the English Standard Version, or the New Living Translation. There are pros and cons to every version.

Whichever version you go with, here are some suggested reading plans:

- Read through the Bible in a year. You can do this by reading three chapters each weekday and five on Sunday. It will take discipline, but you'll learn a lot!
- The Book of Proverbs has 31 chapters. You can read one a day for a month.
- · Read one chapter from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament each day. They give different viewpoints of the same central story: God's plan for redeeming the world.

#### **How Can I Study the** Bible?

One of the best ways to get to know the Bible is called the inductive study method. To use it, take a small section of Scripture and apply three skills: observation, interpretation, and application.

Observe: discover what it says. Read the passage very carefully, without any preconceived ideas, and see exactly what it says. Summarize it in your own words.

**Interpret:** discover what it means. Ask yourself what the passage means. Why was it included in the Bible? What truths Interesting **Bible Facts** 

Chapters in the Bible: 1,189

Longest chapter: Psalm 119

**Shortest chapter: Psalm 117** 

Middle chapter: Psalm 117

**Longest verse: Esther 8:9** 

Shortest verse: John 11:35

does it give us?

**Apply:** change your behavior. Ask what the verses you are studying mean to you personally. What instructions can you put into practice? What behavior is being modeled for you (or are you being warned against)? What changes might you want to make, based on what it says?

It's good to be in a regular Bible study. Many organizations, including Prison Fellowship, offer Bible studies at different institutions. Ask your chaplain what is available at your facility. You can also begin with a correspondence Bible study (see the offer on page three).

There is no substitute for studying the Bible. Plug in today! ■

#### What to Read When ...

You need peace: Matthew 11:25-30 You're lonely or afraid: Psalm 23

You're discouraged: Isaiah 40

Friends fail you: Psalm 27

You're bitter or critical: 1 Corinthians 13

You're in danger: Psalm 81

You need rules of conduct: Exodus 20:1-17

You need assurance: Romans 8

You're growing old: Psalm 71

Your faith is failing: Hebrews 11

You're looking for joy: Colossians 3

God seems distant: Psalm 139

You have sinned: Psalm 51, 1 John 1

# **Noteworthy News**

#### California Passes Prop 47

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - In November 2014, the state of California passed Proposition 47, also known as the Reduced Penalties for Some Crimes Initiative. Sixty percent of the state's voters supported the measure, while 40 percent opposed it.

Proposition 47 reclassified most "nonserious and nonviolent property crimes," such as low-value shoplifting and personal use of some illegal drugs, as misdemeanors instead of felonies, as long as the defendant does not have prior convictions for rape, murder, certain sexual offenses, or certain gun crimes.

The initiative also allows some California prisoners, who are currently serving sentences for crimes previously classified

as felonies, to receive reduced sentences. According to Lenore Anderson of Californians for Safety and Justice, approximately 10,000 people will be eligible for re-sentencing. Resentencing will be dependent on a careful review of prisoners' criminal histories, to ensure they do not pose a risk to public safety.

California estimates that it will save more than \$100 million each year in reduced incarceration costs. The money saved will go toward the Department of Education, the Victim Compensation Government Claims Board, and the Board of State and Community Correction.

#### **Dissident Art on Alcatraz**

SAN FRANCISCO - Ai Wei Wei (pronounced eye way way), an artist well known for his work

challenging the Communist government of China, has put his latest multi-media art installation in an unexpected location: the notorious prison on California's Alcatraz Island.

Ai, 57, planned the exhibit without ever visiting Alcatraz, the prison which once housed Al Capone and "Machine Gun" Kelly. Ai was detained and imprisoned by Chinese authorities in 2011, and though he was later released, he has not been allowed to leave the country. He designed his artwork based on secondhand information, recreating the prison in his mind.

When interviewed at his home in Beijing, China, the artist told Smithsonian Magazine that he selected Alcatraz as a way of drawing attention to the plight of prisoners of conscience around the world.

"Since I also have the experience of being arrested and accused, and so many in my generation are purged or punished in China, and forced to give up their freedom, I focus on the question of what is freedom, and what freedom means to political prisoners today, prisoners of conscience.

Ai's art, which includes avantgarde visual and audio elements, will be on display until April 26, 2015.

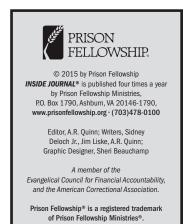
#### **Failed Assassin Visits** Pope's Tomb

ROME - Mehmet Ali Agca, the Turkish man who attempted to assassinate the pope in St. Peter's Square in 1981, arrived at the Vatican in late 2014 wishing to pay his respects.

Then-pontiff John Paul II was critically injured during the attack. After he recovered, the pope forgave Agca at the Roman prison where he was serving a life sentence. Agca

was pardoned by Italy in 2000 and extradited to Turkey, where he was incarcerated for other crimes. He was released from a Turkish prison in 2010.

When Agca arrived at the Vatican last year, he was allowed to visit the tomb of the man he had tried to kill. A Vatican spokesman confirmed that he spent a few minutes in silent meditation at John Paul II's tomb before leaving two dozen white roses.



# PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS OUTPLE OUTPLE OUTPLE VOLUME 24, NO. 2 SPRING 2015

# Is Angel Tree for Real?

#### by Ron Humphrey

t was count time, and Michigan inmate Doug Cupery wondered what the flurry down the line was about. Prisoners were receiving some kind of papers to fill out. When the CO reached Doug's cell, someone told him it was for Angel Tree. Fill out the application, he was told, and strangers would buy and deliver Christmas gifts to his two young children. It sounded like some kind of prison scam, but Doug was determined to find out for himself.

Doug was born into a good home in western Michigan. But tragedy struck when he was just four years old. His father, a Marine pilot, died in a plane crash. Doug's mother, left to raise the family alone, did her best but turned to alcoholism. Without discipline and accountability, Doug also became involved in substance abuse from his teens to his 20s.

But Doug made it to adult-

hood, studying to become a paramedic and a registered nurse. He married his girlfriend, and they settled down to raise two great kids. The American Dream was well within his reach, but the past still dogged Doug, and his inability to handle accountability led him into trouble with the law. In 1998, he was arrested, convicted, and faced with the possibility of some significant prison time.

#### **Walking a Different Path**

While he was awaiting sentencing, some past friends with church connections began showing up to offer Doug support and advice. They explained how Doug could not continue living on his own terms but needed stability in his life. He needed a firm anchor, and Jesus could become what he was missing.

In 1998, Doug entered Chippewa Prison on the Upper Peninsula in Michigan, where he would spend the next three years. Conditions were often

**Continued on p.2** 

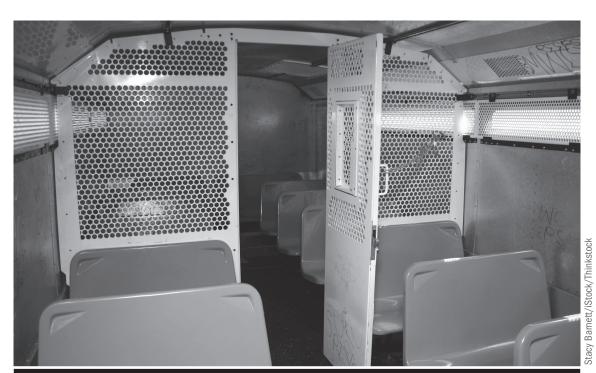
Through an Angel Tree in-prison sign-up initiative like the one shown above, Doug Cupery learned how he could provide Christmas presents for his two young children.

# **Prison Bus Crash Claims 10 Lives**

by A.R. Quinn

DESSA, TX –
On Jan. 14,
2015, a prison
transport bus in
Texas skidded
off an overpass and crashed into
a moving train. The deadly accident has led to calls for better
safety procedures when moving
prisoners between facilities.

At the time of the accident, the bus was headed west between the John Middleton Transfer Facility in Abilene, Texas, and Rogelio Sanchez State Jail in El Paso, Texas, via Interstate 20. The road was icy, and according to a report by the National Transportation Safety Board, there was debris on the road from an earlier car crash. The bus hit the debris, veered off the road, and flew down the embankment before striking a Union Pacific train. The prisoners were handcuffed in pairs and were not wearing seatbelts. Some were thrown out of the bus.



A routine prison transport in Texas turned to tragedy for everyone aboard.

Eight prisoners and two correctional officers were killed in the crash. Five other people—including four prisoners and one staff person—were sent to nearby hospitals with serious injuries.

#### Calls for Safety Review

The deadly crash left prisoners, families, and state officials in grief and shock.

"We have had other accidents, but I can tell you nothing like this where we have lost this many officers and offenders," Jason Clark, a spokesman for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, told the *Odessa American*.

After the accident, several members of the Texas House of Representatives, along with

advocates for criminal justice reform, called for safer prison transportation.

According to the *El Paso Times,* Rep. Senfronia Thomp-

"There are some good people in the prison system, and I'm sure there were some on the bus that day."

son, a Democrat representing Houston, said that she does not want to "point fingers." Instead she wants a review of the way the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, which moves 2,000 prisoners each weekday, gets them from place to place.

For example, she pointed out that prisoners who are handcuffed and chained together have a hard time protecting

Continued on p.3

## **Let Freedom Ring**

### **Guest Column: Jesse Wiese**



The first time I stood up for religious liberty, I was still in prison. I was participating in a faith-based program that was being sued by Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, and I was asked to testify in favor of the program. Unfortunately, we lost the case and the program closed, but I left that experience with a desire to learn more about our constitutional right to religious freedom and, more importantly, how that right could be protected.

I worked hard to "redeem the time" while I was in prison, taking advantage of opportunities that would help me on a path to success. Following my release, I graduated from law school and was able to work for several organizations that defend religious freedom.

This past October, I had the opportunity to be at the Supreme Court to hear arguments in Holt v. Hobbs, a religious freedom case involving a man imprisoned in Arkansas. I submitted a "Brief of Reformed Prisoners," arguing for the importance of religious liberty behind bars, as part of my work with Justice Fellowship. As I walked out of the courtroom and stood on the steps overlooking our nation's capital, I couldn't help but think about the path that led me there. I was overcome with gratitude, awe, and a desire to continue fighting for justice.

The Supreme Court unanimously ruled in favor of Mr. Holt in January 2015, and I am

proud that the cause of religious freedom emerged victorious. But I am convinced that the more important outcome is what you will do with your religious freedom. Have you thought deeply about why you're alive? Have you investigated who God is and what He wants? How will you exercise your religious freedom with the time you have right now?

I found true freedom in Christ alone. All of you reading this are of great worth and value, and I believe that if you embrace that freedom, you will accomplish great things.

Justice Fellowship advocates for state and national reforms and does not provide legal advice or assistance to individuals. Please do not write to Inside Journal to seek legal help in a specific case.

#### **Subscription Info**

At *Inside Journal®* (*IJ*), we receive many letters each week from inmates asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers, however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, *IJ* is *only* available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

# **Your Letters**

#### 'Taking the Hill'

I read in the IJ Winter 2015 edition the article 'Taking the Hill' and I was impressed. Thank you for not forgetting the war veterans who for whatever reason are in prison. I am a 16-year Army infantry veteran with two tours in Iraq. ... We saw action and plenty of it. I came home a different person. In fact, my wife said I had changed so much she wanted me to go back to Iraq and bring her husband home. I went to the vet center and was diagnosed with combat PTSD. ... I committed a crime in 2012

that I still don't understand why ... I am sorry for what I did and I often wonder if I hadn't gone to war in 2005, would I be in here today? I was once thought by all who knew me as a hero for serving my country faithfully, but now I am looked on by all as a convict that society wants to throw away. There are days I would prefer to have died a hero in Iraq than to be remembered, or better yet forgotten, as a convict. We need more people to reach out to veterans in prison and not forget us. All of us put our lives on the line for our country only

to be forgotten when we need help the most! ... I still love my country, with all her mistakes. I just wish my country loved me in spite of mine.

- C.H., Mississippi

Rarely do I ever see anything about incarcerated female veterans ... whose crimes may have direct links to their service experiences. Many female veterans have experienced not only the trauma or conflicts, wars, and injuries, but many of them, especially those of us who served 10, 15, 20, or more years ago suffer from trauma that resulted from rape, sexual, emotional, and physical abuse perpetrated by our fellow soldiers and officers—abuse that we never reported.

... Many of us are incarcerated because we couldn't handle society or found ourselves unable to cope in our jobs and relationships. We are not bad people, we served our country honorably and yet we are forgotten, locked away, when with just a little help, we could return to society as productive citizens.

- D.G., West Virginia

### **Is Angel Tree for Real?**Continued from p.1



**Doug Cupery** 

freezing cold. "I saw snowflakes in June," he recalls. But Doug's hard heart was melting. He vowed to leave prison as a different man, one his family could depend on.

"[Angel Tree]
allowed me to
be their dad
even though
I was away
from them."

He says, "I found some men within the prison who helped me to not only learn how to 'do prison,' but they also helped me to walk a different path. Looking back, I found the first lessons of what it means to be a real Christian, a man, a husband and father, within the

2

walls of a prison."

About that time, Doug saw Angel Tree applications passed out and asked the other men about it. Could Angel Tree be real? Would strangers really go out and spend their own money to buy Christmas gifts for his children? Or was it just another prison scam? He had a daughter, 3, and a son, 5, back home, and they faced a difficult Christmas season with Doug gone.

A friend assured him it was all true, that Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program had been buying and delivering gifts to the children of prisoners since 1982. In wonderment, Doug sat down and completed the application. And sure enough, shortly before Christmas, Angel Tree volunteers showed up at his home with the gifts Doug had suggested for his two children. And they included the Christmas wishes that Doug had asked the volunteers to convey to his children on his behalf.

Doug notes, "I participated in Angel Tree for two years and was very thankful to be part not only for my children, but because it allowed me to be their dad even though I was away from them."

#### **Challenges and Dreams**

Coming home from prison is never easy for anyone. Doug had the support of the church that had cared for his family, but obstacles remained.

"I tried to put my past behind me, but my prison years and background would often pop to the forefront. Whether it was related to finding a job or just getting my head together,



Angel Tree volunteers purchase and distribute gifts for hundreds of thousands of prisoners' children each year.

that past experience was always present."

Soon Doug began to run into other former prisoners who were experiencing the same challenges he was.

"I started looking into this and wondering what could be done to change the course of individuals' lives—men and women—who had completed their prison sentences, yet struggled with the unexpected consequences that followed release."

Doug began to see how God had changed his own life, and he wanted to help other ex-prisoners do the same. As good-hearted and caring Christians in his community saw men and women returning home from prison as no different from them, doors opened. And Doug was able to move forward with a new dream, creating a prison

ministry and reentry program within his own church. That ministry has reached out to many people returning from prison in Michigan.

Doug has never forgotten the lessons he learned from friends behind bars, including the ones who told him about Angel Tree.

He says, "I have never forgotten the impact Angel Tree had on me and my family. I work together now with my ministry and Prison Fellowship, not only on a personal level, but also on a professional level. [...] We are working on ways to [...] walk alongside prisoners' children not just at Christmas but throughout the year."

Doug, whose children are now grown up and attending college, adds, "Through Angel Tree, my own children received many opportunities to grow while I was absent."

To learn more about Angel Tree, talk to your chaplain and see the ad on page 4 of this newspaper. ■

# PRAYER WARRIORS CORNER



- Pray for the safety of persecuted Christians and other religious minorities in North Africa and the Middle East.
- Pray for the reformation of the American criminal justice system so that true life transformation will be possible.
- Pray for the healing of relationships between law enforcement and communities, particularly those divided by race.
- Pray for the growth of Prison Fellowship and other organizations ministering to prisoners and ex-prisoners.

# The Hardest Call to Make

#### by Johnathan Kana

stared at the phone
for a long time before
dialing. This would be the
hardest call of my life,
but I had no choice.
"Johnathan?" My

father's voice was strangely calm.

"Hey, Dad." My own voice was anything but calm. I was literally shaking with fear, and not just because I was placing the call from a holding cell at the county jail.

"Sounds like you've had a rough day," he said. His signature humor made this both easier and more difficult.

"Yeah, I think you could say that," I replied, desperately choking back the tears. "Listen, Dad, I have no right to ask, but I could really use your help right now."

I couldn't help it. Broken and humiliated, I sobbed quietly. Had it not been my first arrest, I might have known the danger of displaying such weakness in front of the haggard men in the cell with me that night. But in that moment, all I really cared about was what my father would say next.

#### **Nowhere to Turn**

In the hours I spent waiting for my "one phone call," I'd mentally rehearsed the arrest over and over again. I relived the sheer panic of staring down the officer's pistol, heard the deafening thump of my heartbeat as I hugged the side of the car to be cuffed and searched. Never before had I been so painfully conscious of the evil inside of me. My life as I knew it was over; from that point on I would always be labeled a criminal.

Still, none of that compared to the thought of facing my parents. They had every right to be angry with me, even to disown me as their son. Waiting breathlessly for my father's response on the other end of the line, I could sense the gulf of emptiness I had created between us. With cold realization, I anticipated having to face the

Author Johnathan Kana agonized over what his father would say when he called from jail.

devastating consequences of my crime all alone.

That's the position all of us are in before God, too. Our rebellion and lawlessness have driven us away from Him, and we're left alone to face the consequences. We may not all be guilty of a serious crime like murder or rape, but that doesn't matter. The Bible says, "We were born with an evil nature, and we [are] under God's wrath just like everyone else" (Ephesians 2:3, NLT). That's because anything we think, say, or do that falls short of God's perfection is sin; and according to the Bible, "You may be sure that your sin will find you out"

(Numbers 32:23).

We weren't created to live this way, and we can't run forever.
Eventually, we have to face God and answer for the evil in us. In our hearts, we know we deserve to be disowned by Him.

#### **Finding Grace**

My father's words finally came through. "Johnathan, God's love is unconditional. Mine is, too. We're going to do anything we can to help."

I remember feeling invincible at that statement. For just a moment, it didn't matter whether I bonded out that same night or spent the next 20 years in prison. I already had the knowledge that would sustain me through the sentence: my father still loved me, and though I didn't deserve it, my parents would stand beside me in spite of my crime. But their love came at a price. I could never repay the financial and emotional burdens my parents have shouldered for me since that night. All I can do is live in a way that, I hope, honors their sacrifice.

God paid an unimaginable price to save us, too. He let his only Son, Jesus, become human and live among us. Both fully God and fully human, Jesus lived the perfect life we never could, only to suffer and die a criminal's death so that we wouldn't have to. When He breathed His last on a cross outside Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago, the debt we owed to Him was paid off in full. Then, when God brought Him back to life three days later, Jesus put an end to death's power over

us-forever.

My father's words gave me new life that night, and any time I think of that phone call from the county jail, I'm reminded of the One who gave everything to stand beside me in my sin. Like my earthly father, Jesus took my call when no one else would—"even while [I was] dead because of [my] sins" (Ephesians 2:5). No one deserves that kind of love, but God can't help showering us with it anyway. And now, thanks to Him, I have a new life.

Jesus wants to share that new life with anyone willing to call out to Him. When the evil in our lives catches up with us, we can rest assured that He's prepared to take our "one phone call."

Ex-prisoner Johnathan Kana completed advanced degrees in biblical studies during his time in prison and on parole. He lives with his family in central Texas.

## It's Your Call

The phone at the county jail only allowed collect calls. Someone on the other end had to accept the charges, and many of the guys there had no one who would pay to hear from them under those circumstances. God isn't like that. His Son has already accepted the charges so that we can get through to Him. It's the most expensive call we can ever make, but thanks to Him we don't have to pay anything to place it.

If you're ready, it only takes a simple prayer, like this:

God, I don't deserve to call myself Your child, yet I know You still love me. I believe Your Son Jesus died in my place, and right now I'm asking You to come into my life and save me. Teach me to live in a way that honors You.

If you prayed those words from a sincere heart, then you're on the road to new life, and *Inside Journal* wants to help. You can enroll in a free correspondence Bible study available through one of our partner organizations—and get a Bible, if you don't have access to one through your facility—by writing to "It's Your Call," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790.

### **Prison Bus Crash** *Continued from p.1*

themselves in the event of a crash, and those without seatbelts are more likely to be thrown out of the vehicle.

Future improvements might save lives, the advocates claimed.

"There are some good people in the prison system and I'm sure there were some on the bus that day," said Rep. Alma Allen, another Houston Democrat.

#### Time Is Precious

The Texas bus accident is a powerful reminder for all of us that life is short and unpredictable. Most of the prisoners on the bus were young—in their 20s and 30s—and being held for relatively minor offenses. When they got on the bus that January morning, they had no way of knowing that their time

on earth was about to be cut short. They wouldn't be getting any more second chances.

It's a painful truth that not many of us like to dwell on, whether we're young or old, behind bars or in the free world: tomorrow is never guaranteed. That fact can be depressing, or it can motivate us to make the most of every day.

Here are some things worth considering:

• "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you" are powerful phrases.

Who in your life needs to know that you're sorry, and who needs your forgiveness? Pride can often stop us from giving and receiving pardon, but we all need to do both things in order to have peace in our lives. It might be time to put down this newspaper and go write the letter you've been



Time is your most precious asset. What will you do with it?

putting off sending to someone who needs to hear from you, whether it's a parent, a spouse, a child, or a friend.

• Do you know where you stand with God? There are

people who promise God they'll do whatever He wants ... eventually, and as long as they get to do whatever they want for a while first. That's a bad game plan for life when you left on the clock.
• Life doesn't stop while

never know how much time is

you're in prison. Your time doesn't get less valuable while you're incarcerated. There may be limits on what you can do, but you can still be the person you're supposed to be right now, and not at some vague point in the future. Seek out opportunities to improve your mind. Become a positive leader for others around you. If you're a parent, you can encourage your kids to do well in school. Sign them up for Angel Tree (see page 4 for details). You might not consider yourself the best role model, but even then, you can reassure them of your love, and help them understand what lessons they can learn from your mistakes. ■

**Inside Journal | Spring 2015** 

# **Great Prisoners of the Bible**

This article originally appeared in the May/June 1994 edition of Inside Journal.

#### Zedekiah: His Weak Will Did Him In

edekiah is
hardly a household name. He
was the last
king of Judah

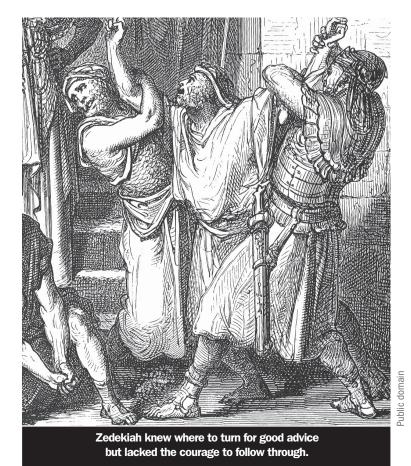
(the southern part of Israel), and he lived nearly 600 years before Christ. He became king at age 21 and reigned for 11 years in Jerusalem.

His story is mainly found in the Old Testament books of 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah. A quick summary is found in Jeremiah 52:1-11.

Zedekiah had access to good advice through the righteous prophet Jeremiah. But he lacked the guts to carry out the advice given him.

He took a sacred oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar, the foreign ruler who put him in power, but he was unfaithful to that oath and openly rebelled.

He had a weak will, and in the end it cost him his kingdom, his sons, his eyesight, and his life.



#### **Ignoring Good Advice**

Read Jeremiah 34:8-22

- What did God tell Zedekiah to do?
- Did he do it?
- What did Zedekiah then allow the people to do?
- What did God say would be the punishment? (34:17)
- What did God say would happen to Zedekiah? (34:21)
- Based on Jeremiah 37:11-21, how did Zedekiah treat God's prophet, Jeremiah?

#### Going Back on a Promise

• In 2 Chronicles 36:13, what did Nebuchadnezzar have

Zedekiah do?

- What was Zedekiah's response?
- What was the impact of his actions on those who were watching and following him?

#### **Meeting an Awful End**

- In the first few verses of Jeremiah 39, what did Nebuchadnezzar's army do to Jerusalem and to Zedekiah?
- When they caught him (verse 5), what did they do to his sons?
- How did Zedekiah spend his final days? (Jeremiah 52:11)

#### What Can We Learn?

 Zedekiah did the right thing by asking advice of a Godfollowing person (Jeremiah). But then he didn't have the follow-through to continue doing what was right. What is the best source of advice for you? How can you get good information that will steer you in the right direction?

- Identify your own areas of character weakness. Where do you most often go back on your promises or on doing what's right?
- After you have asked for God's help, what other sources of help can encourage you in doing right, not wrong?
- Was Zedekiah a success or a failure? By what criteria do you think God measures him?
- How will God measure you?
   How can you avoid the same mistakes Zedekiah made?



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# Connect with Your Child This Christmas!

### What Is Angel Tree?

Maybe you've heard of Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program, but you're not sure how it works. Angel Tree is a simple way to let your children know that you are thinking about them at Christmas.

Angel Tree works like this: Applications are shipped to the chaplains of participating prisons in early June. You fill out an application asking Angel Tree to give your child a gift from you at Christmas (you can suggest what kind of gift you think your child would like). Your chaplain collects all the applications and sends them to Angel Tree by the deadline. In the fall, Angel Tree volunteers call the person who takes care of your child to verify what gift your child would like to receive. Before Christmas, Angel Tree volunteers will buy and wrap the gift. The gift will be delivered to your child's home or given to your child at an Angel Tree Christmas party along with a presentation of the Gospel. Your child will be told that the gift is from you-their mom or dad who loves them! Plus, your brief, personal message to your child will be written on the gift tag.



#### A Gift from Your Heart to Theirs ...

This summer is the time to sign your children up to receive a Christmas present from you through Angel Tree. **Applications for Christmas 2015 must be postmarked by September 1, 2015.** Ask your chaplain or program coordinator for an application, and either the chaplain or program coordinator must submit it for you when you are done.

There are some important restrictions to the Angel Tree program, so please read carefully before filling out an application:



A Program of Prison Fellowship®

- 1) You **must** be the child(ren)'s father, mother, stepfather, or stepmother.
- 2) There **must not be a court order** restricting your contact with the child(ren) or their caregiver(s).
- 3) Your child(ren) must live in the United States.
- 4) Your child(ren) must be **18 years old or younger.**
- 5) The form must be filled out **completely and legibly.**
- 6) The form must be **signed.**
- 7) The form must be **postmarked by September 1, 2015.**

Start preparing now to sign up your children by contacting their caregiver to gather the most current information for your application.

Get an application and sign your kids up today! A special gift from you at Christmas will help them know that you love them, and it will connect them with a church that can come alongside your family in your absence. Best of all, it will give them an opportunity to experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

Angel Tree makes great efforts to serve every eligible child. Sometimes, however, if we are unable to locate your children's caregiver, if the caregiver refuses to participate, or if there are not enough Angel Tree volunteers in a local area, we may not be able to deliver gifts to your children.

If your facility is not signed up and has not received applications, your chaplain may contact **1-800-55-ANGEL** for more information on how to participate.





# PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS OUT TO SUMMER 2015

# From Near Death to Living Hope

by W.M. Thompson

ector Fernandez
was 14 years
old when he ran
away from his
home in Michoacan, Mexico, to
live in the United States.

But before he had the chance to cross the border, he received a phone call that stopped him in his tracks. He learned that his father had killed himself.

"It was the worst day of my life," Hector recalls. He immediately returned home for the funeral.

#### 'I wanted to defend myself'

For decades Michoacan has been a hub for drug trafficking, so Hector grew up around the drug culture. "Drug traffickers looked powerful, and I wanted to defend myself," he says.

Other kids frequently bullied Hector because he was small for his age. His home offered little refuge; his parents fought constantly and disciplined Hector harshly.

The day his father died pushed Hector over the edge.

Fueled by rage and grief, Hector began living a lifestyle that would lead him to the brink of following in his father's footsteps. Relatives arranged for Hector to live in California, hoping a change of scenery would help.

Unfortunately, it wasn't long before Hector was back in with the wrong crowd. His uncle taught him how to sell drugs. Hector joined the South Side Gang and quickly earned veteran status. However, his success came with a price.

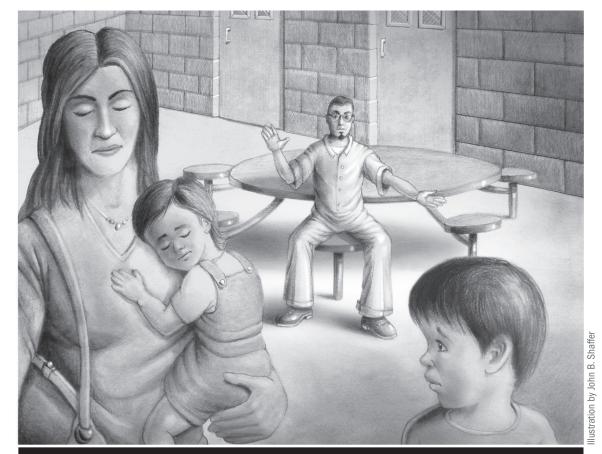
"Many people were murdered, including my best friends," Hector recalls.

At age 17, he feared that he was next. He decided to start fresh by getting married and leaving the state. "I thought having a family would fix everything," he says.

And it did—for a few years. Hector stopped selling drugs and worked at a factory in Minnesota. His wife gave birth to her second child.

"It was my dream come true; I had the perfect American life," Hector says.

But the responsibilities of



Hector was lured back into drug dealing by the promise of "easy money," but his decision cost him priceless relationships.

married life started sinking in, causing Hector to second-guess his decisions.

#### Party's Over

The lure of easy money enticed Hector back into drug trafficking. In Minnesota he

could sell an ounce of cocaine for \$1,200—double what it sold for back in California.

Continued on p.2

# **Making Music Behind the Walls**

# A Review of the Great Prison Recordings

by Steve Rempe

n 1970, blues legend B. B. King performed a show at the Cook County Jail in Chicago, Illinois. Featuring many of his signature songs, including "Every Day I Have the Blues," "How Blue Can You Get?", and "The Thrill Is Gone," the performance is widely considered one of King's best. A recording of that concert, B. B. King Live in Cook County Jail, was recently rated as one of the 500 greatest albums of all time by Rolling Stone magazine.

But Live in Cook County Jail is just one of many important recordings to take place inside prison walls. The sparse, stripped-down sound of the



Johnny Cash's performance at Folsom Prison is perhaps the best-known in-prison recording.

bands, combined with the less-than-perfect acoustics of a prison yard filled with an engaged audience, is tailor-made for the blues. The connection between musicians and prisoners is almost strong enough to touch, and makes for some of the most emotional shows ever recorded.

With King's recent passing, there is an opportunity to look at some of these recordings, and to appreciate the performances.

#### 'At Folsom Prison' and 'At San Quentin' by Johnny

Cash Any list of prison recordings should begin with Johnny Cash. More than perhaps any other musician, Cash connected with the trials and suffering of prisoners, and the love of the audiences in these two prisons for Cash is readily apparent. In both recordings, the prisoners are as much a part of the performance as the musicians. Cash weaves themes of crime, punishment, and incarceration into his lyrics-much to the delight of his audience-but also strikes notes of redemption ("He Turned Water

into Wine," "The Old Account Was Settled Long Ago"), offering a message of forgiveness and transformation.

#### 'Live at Soledad Prison' by John Lee Hooker In 1972,

Chicago bluesman John Lee Hooker performed for prisoners at the Correctional Training Facility in Soledad, California. While finding recordings of this performance has become a bit of a task, the search is worth the effort. Hooker's raspy howl effectively reflects his surroundings, and the audience of roughly 500 prisoners responds wholeheartedly. John Lee Hooker Jr., who performs on the recording with his father, would later serve time in Soledad, as well as a number of other prisons across the United States and Canada for drug offenses. He is now an ordained minister and serves as an evangelist to prisoners.

Continued on p.2

# A Light in the Dark

When I was a child my family sometimes celebrated Independence Day by watching the fireworks that were set off at Disneyland in Anaheim, California. We didn't actually pay to go into the park, but if we sat on the hood of my parents' car in a neighborhood a few miles away, we could still get a pretty good view.

We would stay up long past our normal bedtime to see the bright, loud spectacle begin. We had to; summer days are long, and the fireworks needed a black backdrop to be seen in all their glory.

Sometimes human events are like fireworks. Acts of goodness, compassion, and courage stand out with extraordinary clarity when times are at their worst. That was certainly the case in June of this year in Charleston, South Carolina. On a Wednesday night, a young man walked into a historic AME church. After he was welcomed into a Bible study, he pulled out a gun and opened fire. Nine people died, including a state senator and an 87-yearold woman.

The young man was full of hatred, and he will face the justice due for his crime. But at his arraignment hearing, his victims' families did not respond with



hatred of their own. Though deep in grief, they offered him forgiveness. They urged him to turn to God. "We are the family that love built," said Bethane Middleton-Brown, whose 49-year-old sister was killed. "We have no room for hate, so we have to forgive," she said.

"I just want everyone to know I forgive you," added Nadine Collier, the daughter of 70-yearold victim Ethel Lance. "You hurt me, you hurt a lot of people, but I forgive you."

In an era of division and strife, this kind of forgiveness isn't just unusual-it's almost superhuman. It takes incredible courage. And because it sprang up against a backdrop of such darkness, it's even rarer and more beautifullike fireworks.

We don't have to tell you that prison life often has its share of darkness, too. So when goodness shows up, it's pretty conspicuous. Have you seen encouraging examples of forgiveness, kindness, or compassion? Let us know by writing to Editorial Staff, Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146.

We look forward to reading your stories.

Editor

#### **Subscription Info**

At Inside Journal® (IJ), we receive many letters each week from prisoners asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers, however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is only available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

#### **Making Music** Continued from p.1

'It's About Time' by

Marshall Chapman South Carolina-raised singer-songwriter Marshall Chapman has had songs recorded by everyone from Jimmy Buffett to Joe Cocker, but it's doubtful that any of those recordings were performed with more emotion and conviction than when she performed several of her compositions at the Tennessee State Prison for Women in 1993. The set moves from rowdy rock-androll numbers like "Betty's Being Bad" to more introspective songs like "Happy Childhood," which reminds the audience that "It's never too late to have a happy childhood."

'Friday the 13th at the Cook County Jail' by Jimmy McGriff, Lucky Thompson, George Freeman, and O'Donel Levy In 1972, four accomplished session musicians gathered to perform at the same jail B. B. King had visited two years earlier. While the venue was the same, the style was notably different. Instead of the rootsy blues sound of King, the quartet offered the prisoners a playlist of instrumental jazz and soul, featuring McG-

riff's trademark Hammond B-3 organ and the intricate guitar work of George Freeman. Lucky Thompson's soprano saxophone features prominently on the songs "Green Dolphin Street" and "Cherokee."

'Jail' by Big Mama Thornton Legendary rhythm and blues singer Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton was known for her big, deep voice, and her even bigger personality. Jail was a collection of performances at two prisons in the northwest United States. The recording features two songs originally recorded by Thornton that went on to greater recognition by other artists-"Hound Dog" (later recorded by Elvis Presley) and "Ball 'n' Chain" (more famously



recorded by Janis Joplin). The album concludes with the Gospel standard "O Happy Day" ("Oh, happy day / When Jesus washed / My sins away"). ■

#### **Near Death to Hope** Continued from p.1

Although Hector never used drugs himself, he began abusing alcohol.

On the night of Sept. 6, 2000, Hector celebrated his 20th birthday by partying with his friends. He drunkenly made a deal to sell a kilo of cocaine to a man in the next town over. While driving there, Hector noticed several state patrol cars trailing his car. He started to speed, attempting to flee arrest, but it didn't work.

Hector spent a year in Douglas County Jail in Minnesota, facing a conviction of up to 40 years in prison.

Hector's wife visited with their children and said that she was leaving him. It was the last time that he would ever see them.

In four months behind bars, Hector lost everything.

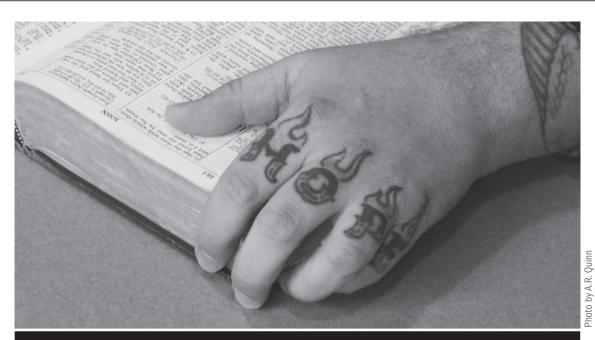
#### Divine Intervention

One day Hector grew so depressed behind bars that he attempted to end his own life by hanging himself. But before he could complete the deed in his cell, he changed his mind.

"I was afraid that I would get into more trouble if somebody found me alive, so I got down," Hector recalls.

The next day, Dave Schonberg, a pastor in Douglas County, happened to visit Hector. Grabbing a book, Dave held Hector's hand and said in Spanish, "Hector, I am here to tell you that Jesus loves you."

Immediately Hector began to weep. "I didn't even know what was happening," Hector says. "All I know is I felt a release



After almost committing suicide, Hector started to find hope when a visitor gave him a Bible.

of something."

Hector read the book—a Bible—as soon as he got back into his cell. He loved reading God's Word, but nightmares of

"I was afraid that I would get into more trouble if somebody found me alive, so I got down."

his violent past still disrupted his sleep. The frightening images drove Hector to kneel by his bed

"I made a deal with God. If ne made me a new man, tnen i would serve him for the rest of my life," Hector recalls.

#### A New Man

Hector was sentenced to 96 months in Minnesota's St. Cloud Correctional Facility. There he learned about a Prison Fellowship faith-based reentry program. Hector thought it was a way to prepare to do the right thing outside of prison. He applied and was accepted into the program at Lino Lakes Correctional Facility.

"It was hard being the only Hispanic and I struggled with my English. But the love of Jesus came upon all of us and changed us," Hector says.

Hector's fellow prisoner Ryan

Lewis also joined the program. Together, the men formed the first Spanish-speaking Bible study at Lino Lakes.

In 2005 Hector was released from prison and deported to Mexico. His reentry program teacher, John Byrne, helped Hector enroll at a seminary in Puebla, Mexico. After Hector graduated, he worked at an orphanage called Esperanza Viva (Living Hope), where he met and married Esther, a young woman who grew up there.

Today Hector and Esther have two children and live in Oaxaca, Mexico. They partner with a local pastor, teaching job skills and sharing the hope of Christ with the people of Oaxaca. ■

#### PRAYER WARRIORS CORNER



• Pray for the administrative staff of your jail or prison to have wisdom, compassion, and effectiveness in their duties.

"I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity." – 1 Timothy 2:1-2

• Pray for healing for those within your jail or prison who may be struggling with serious health problems.

"LORD, help!" they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them, snatching them from the door of death." – Psalm 107:19-20

• Pray for men and women behind bars who are preparing to go home, that they will find safe housing, caring community, and lawful employment.

"So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free ..." – Galatians 5:1

# A Secret No One Knows

by J.L. Rogers

hen I was a little boy, I used to tell kids "I have a secret no one else

knows." Naturally, kids asked what the secret was. But every time, I smirked and said, "I can't tell you, or it won't be a secret anymore."

It was the closest I came to admitting I had been sexually abused. Nobody told me to keep quiet; nobody threatened me. I just knew it was something I had to keep inside. But the problem with keeping something like that inside is it becomes part of your identity.

So I became a young man and walked around in an adult body. But there was still a boy inside who remained trapped in an abusive experience with a neighborhood adolescent. I didn't have the courage to let myself talk about what happened and heal.

As a result, a part of me remained immature and trapped in a psychological prison where I stayed a victim. God had better plans for me though; He was going to release me from my cell.

#### **Into the Prison Cell**

When I turned 18, I became friends with a guy named Shon who had lived a rough life before he became a Christian. One thing I admired about Shon was his lack of shame. Even though he had an ugly past, he wasn't obsessed with it. It wasn't the source of his identity.

Another thing I liked about Shon was that even when I shared things that caused me shame, he didn't panic. He just listened. So one night when I was 23, I



Author J.L. Rogers kept a history of abuse a shameful secret for years. Inspired by an ex-prisoner, he finally decided to speak up and find freedom.

decided to tell him my secret. The problem was, I couldn't get the words out.

For 30 minutes, I stuttered and fumbled over my words, only getting out syllables as Shon waited quietly. Finally, that little boy inside found his voice, told the awful story, and started weeping as Shon said, over and over again, "You're going to be OK."

It was good to venture out of my cell of shame, but I felt afraid. Shon was gracious, but what would happen if I told other people? I already knew what would happen though; I had seen my friend Steve tell a similar story to a room full of college students.

#### Learning from an Ex-Prisoner

Steve is a pastor of mine who has always been cool without trying. He's funny, smart, athletic, and has a lovely wife and children. He's also an ex-prisoner,

and he's willing to tell the truth about himself.

One night at our church's college meeting, Steve was talking about shame, and he shared a verse from Hebrews 12:2. It says, "Because of the joy awaiting him, [Jesus] endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne."

Steve said, "Jesus came to take your shame, and you don't have to carry that around with you anymore. He already handled that. Listen folks: A man molested me when I was 13 years old. I don't have to carry that shame anymore. Jesus took that shame, and He can take yours, too."

Steve looked so confident, so convinced when he said that, and I never forgot it. In fact, I'm sure that sermon is part of the reason I eventually had the courage to tell Shon, other friends, and my wife. None of those folks

made me feel dirty or damaged or disgusted with myself. They loved me and reminded me of the truth of Scripture, which set me free. And now I can tell large audiences without shame.

#### **Breaking Free**

When I read Scripture, I try to picture it in my mind. And there's one particular image that sticks with me whenever I feel tempted to see myself as a victim again. Galatians 2:20 says, "My old self has been crucified with Christ."—or in other words, executed.

Sometimes I picture that sexually abused boy on the cross

beside Jesus. Jesus and the little boy are dead, and that's heartbreaking until I remember that unless I allow my old self to "die," I can't become the new self Jesus offers to make me.

Then I recall the rest of the verse: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Yes, I was damaged as a child, and maybe you were too, but that child is no more. When we bring the pain and shame of the past to Jesus, He can lay them to rest for us and give us a new identity.

### **Moving Forward**

Healing from the pain of sexual abuse takes time, and it isn't something you should try to do alone. Reach out to a trusted friend, chaplain, or counselor and talk about what happened to you. But understand that one conversation about what happened probably won't be enough. You need to talk to someone who will give you the space, over time, to share as much as you're comfortable saying.

You also need to be honest with God about your feelings of anger or hurt inside. He already knows about those feelings anyway, but He wants you to trust Him with them. He can also give you a fresh start as you trust in Him. If, as I did with Shon, you struggle to find the words to talk about your brokenness with God, you might want to start with this sample prayer.

God, I've been broken, but I don't want to be defined by the past. As I give my shame to You, please make me a new creation through Jesus and His gift of new life. Thank You that Your grace and power are enough for me.

If you'd like to learn more about what it means to be a "new creation" in Jesus, *Inside Journal* wants to help. Write to "Moving Forward," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. We'll connect you with a trusted partner organization that offers free correspondence Bible studies and NIV Bibles to those who enroll in their program.

#### Connect with Your Child This Christmas!

#### What Is Angel Tree?

Maybe you've heard of Prison Fellowship's
Angel Tree program, but you're not sure how it works.
Angel Tree is a simple way to let your children know that you are thinking about them at Christmas.

Angel Tree works like this: Applications are shipped to the chaplains of participating prisons in early June. You fill out an application asking Angel Tree to give your child a gift from you at Christmas (you can suggest what kind of gift you think your child would like). Your chaplain collects all the applications and sends them to Angel Tree by the deadline. In the fall, Angel Tree volunteers call the person who takes care of your child to verify what gift your child would like to receive. Before Christmas, Angel Tree volunteers will buy and wrap the gift. The gift will be delivered to your child's home or given to your child at an Angel Tree Christmas party along with a presentation of the Gospel. Your child will be told that the gift is from you-their mom or dad who loves them! Plus, your brief, personal message to your child will be written on the gift tag.

Angel Tree® is a registered trademark of



#### A Gift from Your Heart to Theirs ...

This summer is the time to sign your children up to receive a Christmas present from you through Angel Tree. **Applications for Christmas 2015 must be postmarked by September 1, 2015.**Ask your chaplain or program coordinator for an application, and either the chaplain or program coordinator must submit it for you when you are done.

There are some important restrictions to the Angel Tree program, so please read carefully before filling out an application:



- 1) You **must** be the child(ren)'s father, mother, stepfather, or stepmother.
- 2) There **must not be a court order** restricting your contact with the child(ren) or their caregiver(s).
- 3) Your child(ren) must live in the United States.
- 4) Your child(ren) must be 18 years old or younger.
- 5) The form must be filled out completely and legibly.
- 6) The form must be **signed.**
- 7) The form must be **postmarked by September 1, 2015.**

Start preparing now to sign up your children by contacting their caregiver to gather the most current information for your application.

Get an application and sign your kids up today! A special gift from you at Christmas will help them know that you love them, and it will connect them with a church that can come alongside your family in your absence. Best of all, it will give them an opportunity to experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

Angel Tree makes great efforts to serve every eligible child. Sometimes, however, if we are unable to locate your children's caregiver, if the caregiver refuses to participate, or if there are not enough Angel Tree volunteers in a local area, we may not be able to deliver gifts to your children.

If your facility is not signed up and has not received applications, your chaplain may contact **1-800-55-ANGEL** for more information on how to participate.

## **Colson Task Force Seeks Reform**

TON, D.C. - Prison overcrowding and other

problems are nothing new. But there's a new group seeking solutions to these problems within the federal system: the Charles Colson Task Force on Federal Corrections.

The Task Force is a nineperson, bipartisan, blue-ribbon group created by Congress. It has been charged with looking into challenges within the federal corrections system and developing new, smarter, practical policies to deal with them. After it holds four meetings in Washington, D.C., the Task Force will present its findings and recommendations to the Department of Justice, Congress, and the President.

The Task Force, established in 2014, has already met three times. Its first meeting, on January 27, 2015, was held at the Urban Institute, a social and economic policy organization. At the January meeting, the group heard testimony from four federal officials with extensive knowledge of the system. All the presenters—including a U.S.

district attorney, the director of the Bureau of Prisons, a representative of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, and a district court judge-pointed out that overcrowded, understaffed federal prisons are more dangerous and less rehabilitative. Though the population of the federal system has leveled off and even dropped in recent years, overcrowding remains a problem, especially in higher-security facilities. To address these problems, they said, the Task Force will



Former Congressman J.C. Watts Jr., a Republican from Oklahoma, chairs the Charles Colson Task Force.

need to investigate alternatives to incarceration, policy reforms, and reentry support.

The second and third meetings, held in March and May 2015, addressed similar issues, including sentencing reform, changes to prosecutorial practices, and the expansion of diversion courts and innovative alternatives to incarceration. By studying legal reforms, policy changes, and other new approaches, including some promising ones already at work in the federal system, the Task Force hopes to curb corrections spending and make more money available for adequate space, staffing, and educational programming. The Task Force will meet for the final time in September 2015.

The Charles Colson Task Force on Federal Corrections is named for Prison Fellowship's founder, an aide to President Richard Nixon who spent time at a federal prison camp in Alabama on charges related to the Watergate scandal. Jim Liske, the current president and CEO of the ministry, serves on the Task Force to represent the perspective of men and women behind bars, the formerly incarcerated, and their families.

#### **Members of the Task Force**

- Former Congressman J.C. Watts Jr. (Chair)
- Former Congressman Alan B. Mollohan (Vice Chair)
- David C. Iglesias, Director of the Wheaton College Center for Economics, Government, and Public Policy
- Jim Liske, President and CEO of Prison Fellowship
- · Jay Neal, Executive Director of the Georgia Office of Transition, Support, and Reentry
- Laurie O. Robinson, Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs
- Cynthia Roseberry, Project Manager for the Clemency Project of the National Association of Criminal **Defense Lawyers**
- Hon. Ricardo M. Urbina, Retired Federal Judge, United States District Court for the District of Columbia
- John E. Wetzel, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections



# **New All-Faiths Chapel Dedicated**

USKEGON, MI - People of all religionswhether Muslim,

Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh, or any other faith-have a new place to worship at Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility, a state prison in Michigan.

The Holy Grounds All-Faiths Chapel, built through private donations, was dedicated on May 17, 2015. It will serve residents of the facility who, up to now, have relied on the prison gymnasium and classrooms for all religious activities.

The chapel has been a long-standing vision of Warden Mary Berghuis, who saw the

importance of the chapel at West Shoreline Correctional Facility, the other prison she has run in Michigan. She believes that having a place dedicated to spiritual programming helps prisoners prepare to rejoin the community.

> "Oh, it makes a real difference," the warden told a writer for the Muskegon Chronicle. "I see the difference in the men. When they come out, their identity is affected."

"A lot of prisoners, once the drugs and alcohol come out of their systems they're remorseful," Berghuis continued. "And the chapel helps them deal

The chapel has been a long time coming. The vision was



Before a chapel existed, Prison Fellowship founder Chuck Colson spoke to men at E.C. Brooks' gymnasium in 2010.

born more than a decade ago, but the recent economic recession slowed the pace of donations, and in 2008, the builder

"It gives them a separate space that's away from the day-to-day harshness of the prison. A place to escape and practice their faith." - Warden **Berghuis** 

who planned to lead the project died suddenly.

When the chapel was finally dedicated, Berghuis attended the Sunday afternoon ceremony, along with Michigan Department of Corrections Director Dan Heyns and Prison Fellowship President and CEO Jim Liske. Prisoners and ex-prisoners were also present to mark the event.

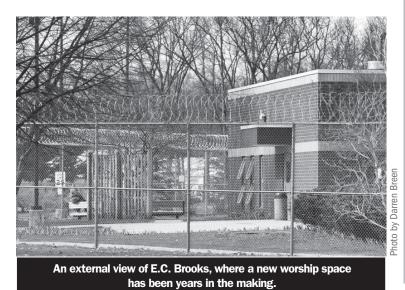
"I would consider this not so much a chapel for the inmates at E.C. Brooks as a chapel for all the citizens," Liske, a former West-Michigan pastor, told the Muskegon Chronicle. "Because if these inmates don't commit another crime, they all benefit."

to make their facilities safer,

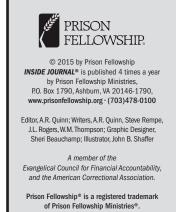
more rehabilitative environments," he added, stressing the importance of how prisoners spend their time behind bars, as well.

In addition to worship services, the new chapel building will also house E.C. Brooks' religious library and classes for The Urban Ministry Institute, a high-level theological program offered at the prison to qualified applicants. The program, administered by Prison Fellowship volunteers in partnership with urban missions organization World Impact, has been in operation at E.C. Brooks for several years. Many of its graduates serve as lay pastors within the prison.

Thanks to the new chapel, they'll have a new space to practice the faith they are studying.



"Men behind bars have such potential to be transformed, and



# EL PERIÓDICO DE PRISON FELLOWSHIP EN ESPAÑOL OUT SEN ESPAÑOL OUT SEN ESPAÑOL OUT SEN ESPAÑOL VOLUMEN 3, NO. 1 VERANO 2015

# Un Acuerdo Con Dios

Por W.M. Thompson

éctor Fernández
tenía 14 años
cuando huyó
de su hogar
en Michoacán,
México, para
buscar una nueva vida en los
Estados Unidos.

Estaba al punto de cruzar la frontera cuando recibió una llamada con noticias inesperadas: su padre se había suicidado.

"Fue el peor día de mi vida," dice Héctor. Inmediatamente, se volvió a casa para el funeral.

#### "Quería Defenderme"

Por muchos años, Michoacán ha sido un centro para el narcotráfico, así que Héctor creció en una cultura de drogas y violencia. "Los narcotraficantes me parecían poderosos, y yo quería defenderme," dice.

Porque era pequeño para su edad, los jóvenes más grandes lo intimidaban, mandoneándolo y burlándose de él. Su casa ofrecía poco refugio – sus padres se peleaban constantemente y lo castigaban severamente.

El suicidio de su padre le llevó al extremo a Héctor. Lleno de rabia y pena, adoptó un peligroso estilo de vida. Esperando que un cambio de lugar sería beneficioso, sus parientes lo ayudaron a mudarse a California.

Desafortunadamente, Héctor pronto se mezcló con la gente equivocada de nuevo. Su tío le enseñó a vender drogas. Héctor se juntó con la pandilla South Side y rápidamente ganó el estatus de veterano. Pero su éxito llevó un gran precio.

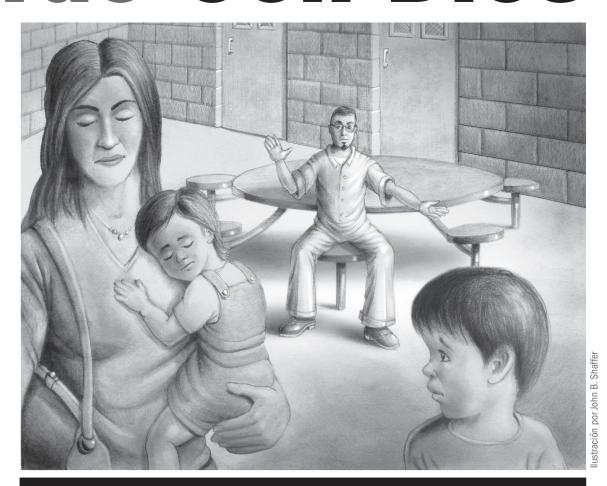
"Muchas personas fueron matados, incluyendo mis mejores amigos," recuerda Héctor.

A los 17 años, tenía miedo del futuro. Decidió empezar de nuevo por casarse y trasladarse a otro estado.

"Pensaba que tener una familia arreglaría todo," dice.

Su plan le sirvió bien – por un rato. Héctor dejó de vender drogas y trabajaba en una fá-

Continúa en la pág. 2



En busca de "dinero fácil," Héctor perdió las cosas más preciosas: su familia, su libertad, y su futuro.

# ¿Hasta que la Prisión Nos Separe? Mantiendo Su Matrimonio Tras las Rejas

Por John Byrne

o hay presión más fuerte afectando un matrimonio que el encarcelamiento. El peso

de la separación, vergüenza, dificultades financieras, y malentendidos mutuos, incluso ocurre en uniones que parecían duraderos pueden deshacerse. Ron Grant, el capellán de una prisión en California, en un artículo en el New York Times dice que se estima que "entre el día del arresto de un hombre casado y el fin de su primer año de encarcelamiento, un 80 por ciento de matrimonios se disuelven ... Para las mujeres tras las rejas, el porcentaje de divorcios es casi 100 por ciento."

Aunque un matrimonio sobreviva el encarcelamiento, el esposo enfrentará más dificultades aun después del día de liberación. Es posible que su cónyuge se quede con usted durante su arresto, juicio, y sentencia, con la esperanza de seguir su vida juntos cuando usted salga de la prisión. No obstante, estos matrimonios suelen fracasar con el tiempo. ¿Por qúe?

Las razones para estos fracasos son complicados.



Cuando está encarcelado, su esposo sufre también. Puede tomar pasos para fortalecer su matrimonio.

Consideramos una situación: Una mujer es encarcelada. Su esposo promete esperar que ella sea liberada. Él trabaja, cuida a los niños con la ayuda de familiares, y viene a visitarla. Es difícil para él, pero el piensa que esto es lo que debe hacer. Los familiares le ponen presión para que el no le haga sentirse abandonada o herida. El esposo genuinamente se preocupa por su esposa, que está encarcelada. Él siente lástima por lo que ella está pasando. Él no puede imaginarse lo que ella está atravesando. Él no se imagina lo que sería pidiéndole el divorcio mientras que ella permanece tras de las rejas, porque él sabe que esto la devastaría emocionalmente. Después que la esposa regresa al hogar, la empatía se disuelve. Los problemas verdaderos en el matrimonio surgen de nuevo, causando la separación o el

divorcio.

Consideremos otro escenario: Un hombre es arrestado y encarcelado, dejando su esposa y unos cuando niños. La esposa lucha por los primeros meses, pero eventualmente crea una nueva vida para ella y sus hijos. Ella trabaja, cuida su familia. Los niños están creciendo y ella es la única autoridad en sus vidas. Ella llama y visita a su esposo en la cárcel, cuantas veces puede costearlo, pero básicamente, ella ha tenido que aprender a funcionar sin él. Cuando su esposo sale de la cárcel, él trata lo mejor que puede de ser un buen padre, imponiendo la disciplina y ser el "hombre de la casa", pero parece que él se haya mudado a una casa de desconocidos. Sus hijos lo miran como si fueran a decir: ¿De dónde viniste? Su esposa está contenta de que él está de nuevo en la

Continúa en la pág. 2

# **Cartas al Editor**

#### 'Somos Olvidados Completamente'

Soy un prisionero terrenal, pero espiritualmente ya no lo soy, porque he entregado my vida a Cristo Jesús. ... Antes estaba viviendo una vida llena de pecado y en los placeres del mundo y de la carne, estaba siendo desobediente a Dios. Pero ahora soy una nueva criatura en Cristo Jesús y un siervo fiel, por eso quiero crecer espiritualmente para predicar la palabra de Dios a otras personas aquí adentro de esta prisión terrenal. Igualmente cuando Dios me libere de esta prisión seguiará predicando su palabra fuera y ganar más almas para la honra y gloria de El. Así mismo visitiré a los prisioneros en las carceles de mi país Guatemala, para llevarles el mensaje de las Buenas Nuevas del reino de Dios. Porque nosotros prisioneros somos olvidados completamente por la sociedad hasta por nosotros propios familias e hijos. Yo quiero se un trabajador de tiempo completo en la obra del Señor. Por eso le pido a mi Dios que me útilice para sus propósitos que Él tiene para



mi vida, aunque todavía me faltan muchos años para salir. Pero quiero aprovecharlos para crecer espiritualmente.

- M.E.S.L., Arizona

#### 'Nunca Es Tarde'

Soy católico ... Quiero saber mas de Cristo y quiero acercarme más a Él. Quiero fortalecer más mi fe porque mi fé está muy debil. Tengo una Biblia que leo diario pero no puedo entenderla todavía. Habido personas que me han explicado pasajes bíblicos y que me gusta mucho es esucharlos. Aqui vienen predicadores a dar misa pero yo no he podido asistir porque hablan puro inglés y yo no entiendo el

inglés bien. ... Quisiera pedirles una Biblia. Trabajo en la cocina pero cuando no hay nada que hacer me puedo poner a leer la palabara de Dios. Sí los libros se venden aquí, pero no voy a poder comprarlos. La verdad no tengo dinero y mi familia no me apoya. Me dejaron solo desde que fui arrestado. La llevo 17 meses encerrado ... Voy a ser deportado a México y quiero que Dios me perdone mis percados y estoy muy arrepentido por todo lo malo hace hice pero como me han dicho nunca es tarde para buscar a Dios y arrepentirse de los pecados.

- P.A., Georgia

Recibimos muchas cartas de hombres y mujeres en prisión que quieren recibir Inside Journal en Español. Damos gracias a Dios por su interés, pero nuestro periódico solo está disponible por medio de capellanes o voluntarios que visitan su prisión. Capellanes y voluntarios pueden contactarnos por escribir a insidejournal@pfm.org o Inside Journal, PO Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146 para recibir Inside Journal (en inglés, español, o ambos) gratis.

#### **Matrimonio** Viene de la pág. 1

casa, pero ella tiene años de resentimiento acumulado por tener que ser la responsable por tomar las riendas de su hogar. Los conflictos aumentan, amenazando a destruir la familia recién reunida.

Si está encarcelado y todavía casado, tendrá que enfrentar una batalla ardua, pero usted y su familia pueden superar los obstáculos con mucha fe, amor, sinceridad y dedicación. Aquí ofrezco unos consejos para ayudarle a mantener su matrimonio mientras está encarcelado – y crear las bases fundamentales y firmes para una mejor relación en el futuro:

1) Use su tiempo tras las rejas para crecer como per**sona.** Si ya está siguiendo a Jesús, continue. Estudie la Biblia y aprenda lo que El dice sobre el propósito para su vida. Usted puede ser el más grande activo de valor para ayudar a su esposa y su familia si está en el proceso de hacerse una nueva persona. Si no sabe donde está con Dios, nunca es muy tarde para comenzar una relación con Él (Léase el artículo en la página 3 de este periódico.), y puede evaluarse a si mismo para hacerse unas preguntas difíciles: ¿Qué efecto han tenido sus decisiones y su encarcelamiento para su

cónyuge? ¿Ha dicho "lo siento" a su cónyuge? ¿Está listo para cambiar su estilo de vida?

#### 2) Déjele saber a su cónyuge (y niños) que ellos son su Prioridad Number Uno. Si estás empleado, envíale dinero para la ropa escolar, comida, o regalitos especiales. No importa cúanto puede mandar. Lo que es importante es hacer sacrificios para su familia, en vez de siempre pedirles cosas para si mismo. Escríbeles o llámelos por teléfono. Escuche a su cónyuge, en vez de quejarse. Ore por su cónyuge y sus hijos todos los días.

3) Si su cónyuge tiene problemas con las drogas o el alcohol, NO vaya a la casa cuando esté puesto en libertad. Sé que es un consejo difícil, pero lo mejor que puede hacer para sus familiares es mantenerse limpio y sobrio, lejos de la tentación, y déjelos ver que está viviendo una nueva vida. Si ha luchado contra la adicción en el pasado, su recuperación tiene que ser primero. Será muy difícil, pero si confia en Cristo, puede saber que en Él, todo es posible. Permita que las cosas se arreglen cuando Dios así lo decida.

John Byrne es el director de un programa basado de fe en Lino Lakes Correctional Facility.

#### **Esperanza Viva** Viene de la pág. 1

brica en Minnesota. Su esposa le dio a luz a un segundo niño.

"Fue mi sueño realizado; tenía la perfecta vida americana," dice Héctor.

Pero, poco a poco, las responsabilidades de su nueva vida como cabeza de familia empezaron a pesarle. Héctor dudó de sus decisiones.

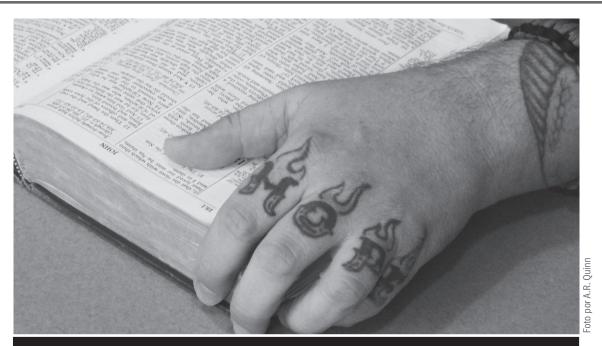
#### Se Acaba la Fiesta

El cebo de dinero fácil tentó a Héctor para vender drogas de nuevo. En Minnesota podría vender una onza de cocaína por \$1200—doble del precio en California.

Aunque no usaba las drogas que vendía, Héctor empezó a abusar del alcohol.

La noche del 6 de septiembre, 2000, Héctor cumplió 20 años. Celebró, reventándose con unos amigos. Embriagado, llegó a un acuerdo a vender un kilo de cocaína a un hombre

"No entendí por qué estaba llorando."



Después de casi suicidarse, Héctor encontró esperanza en lás páginas de una Biblia que un visitante le dio.

en una ciudad cercana. Mientras manejaba hacia la otra cuidad, Héctor vio unos coches patrullas siguiéndolo. Empezó a exceder el límite de velocidad, intentando evadir a la policía, pero no pudo.

Después de su arresto, pasó un año en la cárcel del Condado de Douglas en Minnesota, enfrentando la posibilidad de 40 años entre rejas. Mientras estaba allí, su esposa le visitó con sus hijos. Dijo que quería separarse de él. Héctor nunca los vio de nuevo. Había perdido todo: su familia, su libertad, y su futuro.

#### Ayuda Divina

Un día Héctor se puso tan

deprimido que decidió suicidarse—como había hecho su propio padre—por colgarse. Pero antes de terminar el hecho, cambió de idea.

"Tenía miedo de meterme en líos si alguien me encontrara todavía vivo. Por eso me bajé," recuerda.

El próximo día, Dave Schonberg, un pastor en el Condado de Douglas, visitó a Héctor. Dándole un libro, Dave le agarró la mano a Héctor y le dijo en español, "Héctor, estoy aquí para decirte que Jesucristo te ama."

Inmediatamente Héctor comenzó a llorar. "No entendí por qué estaba llorando," dice. "Solo sé que sentí la liberación de algo dentro de mí."

Héctor empezó a leer el libro—una Biblia—tan pronto como llegó a su celda, y no dejó de leerlo. Le encantaban las cosas que encontraba en la Palabra de Dios durante el día, pero pesadillas de su pasado violento todavía interrumpían su reposo. Las imágenes espantosas empujaron Héctor a arrodillarse al lado de su cama y orar.

"Llegué a un acuerdo con Dios. Si Él mi hiciera un nuevo hombre, yo Lo serviría por el resto de mi vida," Héctor recuerda.

#### **Un Nuevo Hombre**

Héctor fue sentenciado a

96 meses en la prisión de St. Cloud en Minnesota. Allí supo de un programa de reingreso, con base de fe, dirigido por Prison Fellowship. Héctor pensaba que sería una manera de prepararse para una nueva vida fuera de la prisión. Solicitó y consiguió un puesto en el programa en Lino Lakes Correctional Facility.

"Era difícil ser el único hispano y tenía dificultad con mi inglés. Pero el amor de Jesucristo nos llenó a todos los hombres en el programa, y nos cambió," dice Héctor.

Un compañero de Héctor en la cárcel llamado Ryan Lewis también se inscribió en el programa. Juntos, los hombres fundaron el primer estudio de la Biblia para los presos hispanohablantes de Lino Lakes.

En 2005 Héctor fue puesto en libertad y deportado a México. John Byrne, su mentor del programa de reingreso, le ayudó a inscribirse en un seminario teológico en Puebla, México.

Después de graduarse, Héctor trabajó en un orfanatorio llamado Esperanza Viva, donde conoció y más tarde se casó con Esther, una mujer que había crecido en la institución.

Hoy en día, Héctor y Esther tienen dos niños y viven en Oaxaca, México. Colaborando con un pastor local, enseñan aptitudes laborales y comparten la esperanza de Cristo con la gente de Oaxaca. ■

# **Un Secreto Que Nadie Sabe**

Por J.L. Rogers

uando era niño, les decía a otros chicos, "Tengo un secreto que nadie sabe." Naturalmente, los chicos me preguntaban

qué era el secreto. Cada vez yo les contestaba, "No puedo decirlo. Si les dijera, no sería más un secreto."

Fue lo más cercano que vine a confesar de que yo había sufrido abuso sexual. Nadie me pidió callarme; nadie me amenazó, pero sabía que era algo que debía mantener en secreto-escondido de todo el mundo. El problema es que cuando se guarda un secreto terrible, el mismo se hace parte de tu identidad.

Me convertí en un hombre joven, pasando por el mundo en cuerpo de adulto, pero por dentro, todavía había un niño pequeño, atrapado en la experiencia abusiva que tuve con un adolescente que vivía cerca de mi casa. No tenía suficiente coraje para confesar lo que me había pasado-para destapar la herida y dejarla sanar.

Como resultado, una parte de mí permanecía inmaduro, atrapado en una prisión psicológica donde era siempre la víctima. Pero Dios tenía mejores planes para mí; iba a liberarme.

#### Diciendo la Verdad

Cuando cumplí 18 años, me hice amigo de un chico que se llamaba Shon. Él había llevado una vida difícil antes de hacerse cristiano. Aunque había sufrido bastante, y había hecho cosas lamentables, no se obsesionaba con ellas. El pasado no era la fuente de su identidad. Por eso lo admiraba.

También admiraba que cuando le hablaba de cosas que me causaban vergüenza, él no me juzgaba. Solo me escuchaba. Por eso, una noche cuando tenía 23



J.L Rogers escondió el abuso sexual que había sufrido como niño, pero un ex-prisionero le dio el coraje para decir la verdad y encontrar libertad.

años, decidí decirle mi secreto. Pero por 30 minutos, las palabras no me salían de la boca. Tartamudeando y titubeando, solo conseguí formar sílabas. Shon esperó con paciencia. Por fin, el niño dentro de mí encontró su voz, le contó la historia lamentable, y empezó a llorar, mientras Shon decía, una y otra vez, "Vas a estar bien. Vas a estar bien."

Fue bueno salir de mi prisión de vergüenza, pero tenía miedo. Shon era muy atento y amable, ¿pero que pasaría si dijera mi secreto a otra gente? Pero, en realidad, ya sabía que pasaría. Había visto a mi amigo Steve cuando dijo una historia similar a un grupo de estudiantes universitarios.

Steve es un pastor que conozco. Es muy bueno, chistoso, listo,

atlético, y tiene una familia linda. Además, es un ex-preso, y no tiene miedo al decir la verdad sobre su pasado. Una noche, durante un mitin para estudiantes en la iglesia a que asistía, Steve hablaba sobre la vergüenza, y compartió un versículo de la carta a los Hebreos en el Nuevo Testamento. El versículo dice, "[Mantengan] los ojos en Jesús, el autor y consumador de la fe, el cual por el gozo puesto delante de él sufrió la cruz, menospreciando el oprobio, y se sentó a la diestra del trono de Dios."

Steve dijo, "Jesús vino para quitar tu vergüenza, y no tienes que llevarla a todos lados. Jesús ya se ha encargado de todo eso. Oye: Un hombre me molestó cuando tenía 13 años. Ya no tengo que llevar el oprobio. Jesús me quitó la vergüenza, y puede

quitarte la tuya también."

Steve parecía tan seguro, tan convencido de la verdad de las palabras que decía, y nunca lo olvide. De hecho, aquel sermón me dio el coraje para decir mi secreto a Shon, a otros amigos de confianza, y a mi esposa. Ninguna de estas personas me hizo sentirme sucio, dañado, o asqueroso. Me amaron y me recordaron la verdad de la Palabra de Dios, que me puso en libertad. Actualmente, puedo contar mi secreto a audiencias grandes sin vergüenza.

#### La Libertad

Cuando leo la Biblia, trato de formar una imagen de las palabras en mi mente. Cuando me siento tentado a verme como víctima de nuevo, hay una imagen que me ayuda mucho. Gálatas 2:20 dice, "Con Cristo estoy

juntamente crucificado ..." - en otras palabras, ejecutado.

A veces me imagino el niño abusado que era, en la cruz con Jesús. Jesús y el niño están muertos, y me siento muy triste, hasta que recuerdo que no puedo ser una persona nueva hasta que la persona vieja se muere. Entonces recuerdo el resto del versículo: "... y ya no vivo yo, mas vive Cristo en mí; y lo que ahora vivo en la carne, lo vivo en la fe del Hijo de Dios, el cual me amó y se entregó a sí mismo por mí."

Sí, fui abusado de niño, y quizás usted ha sufrido de la misma manera, pero ya no somos los niños que éramos. Cuando ofrecemos el oprobio y el dolor del pasado a Jesús, El es capaz de enterrarlos para siempre, y darnos, a cambio, una nueva identidad.

### **Un Paso Adelante**

Para sanar las heridas emocionales del abuso sexual, se necesitan tiempo, paciencia, y ayuda. Si es algo que usted ha experimentado personalmente, busque un amigo confiado, un capellán, o un mentor para discutir lo que le ha pasado. Pero una sola conversación probablamente no será suficiente.

También necesita compatir sus sentimientos cándidos - sean de rabia o dolor - con Dios. Él ya sabe como se siente, pero Él quiere escucharlo, como su mejor amigo. El puede ayudarlo a tener un nuevo comienzo. Si, como yo tuve dificultad hablando con Shon, le faltan las palabras para discutir su dolor con Dios, puede empezar con una oración como la siguiente:

Dios, he sido quebrado, pero no quiero ser definido por el pasado. Te doy mi vergüenza. Por favor, hazme una nueva creación por Tu Hijo Jesucristo. Te agradezco que Tu gracia y poder son suficientes para mí.

Si usted quiere aprender más sobre lo que quiere decir ser una "nueva creación" por Jesucristo, Inside Journal quiere ayudarlo. Escríbanos a "Un Paso Adelante," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. Lo pondremos en contacto con una organización que ofrece, gratis, cursos de studio bíblico por correspondencia, y también copias de la Santa Biblia para los que se inscriben en su programa (cursos y Biblias disponibles en español).

### ¡Escuche "Libres en Cristo" en Radio Nueva Vida!

Cada Lunes, Martes, Miércoles, Jueves, y Viernes A los 2:05 por la tarde (Hora del Pacífico) **Con Jorge García** 



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FM 91.5, Redding FM 91.7, Victorville FM 95.5, Palm Springs FM 95.9, Soledad FM 96.3, Indio FM 98.1, Grand Terrace FM 101.7, Santa Maria FM 106.9, Muscoy AM 980, Fresno AM 1130, San Diego AM 1130, Tijuana, México AM 1240, San Bernadino

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FM 91.3, Desert Center

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## "Task Force Colson" Busca Reforma

ASHING-TON, D.C. -La sobrepoblación, además de otros

problemas en el Sistema Federal de Prisiones, no son nuevas —pero hay un grupo nuevo en la búsqueda de soluciones para estos problemas: El Charles Colson Task Force en Correcciones Federales.

El "Task Force", creado por el Congreso, está compuesto por 9 personas distinguidas de ambos partidos políticos. El propósito es señalar los retos dentro del Sistema Federal de Correcciones para recomendar y desarrollar nuevas políticas mas prácticas e inteligentes para manejar y resolver estos asuntos. Despúes de cuatro reuniones en Washington, D.C., el "Task Force" presentará sus hallazgos y recomendaciones al Departamento de Justicia, el Congreso, y el Presidente.

El "Task Force", establecido en 2014, se ha reunido en tres ocasiones. La primera re-unión se llevó a cabo el 27 de enero del 2015, en el Instituto Urbano, una organización sin fines de lucro, la cual estudia la política económica y social. Durante esa reunión, el grupo escuchó testimonios de cuatros funcionarios federales, quienes tienen amplio conocimiento del sistema. Todos los presenta-



J.C. Watts Jr., un ex-congresista de Oklahoma, dirige el "Task Force.

dores-incluyendo un fiscal de distrito, el director de la Agencia de Prisiones, un representante de la Comisión de Sentencias, y un juez del juzgado de distritonotaron que prisiones federales con sobrepoblación de presos y con poco personal, son más peligrosos y contribuyen muy poco a la restauración de los encarcelados. Aunque la población del sistema federal se ha disminuído en años recientes, la sobrepoblación permanece problemática, especialmente en instalaciones de alta seguridad. Para enfrentarnos a estos problemas, los funcionarios de este "Task Force" necesitan investigar y recomendar alternativas a la encarcelación, sugerir reformas a la política, y

apoyo y programas para el exencarcelado cuando tenga que reingresarse a la sociedad.

Las reuniones llevadas a cabo en marzo y mayo del 2015 investigaron temas semejantes, incluyendo las reformas a las sentencias, cambios a la práctica de abogados de la fiscalia, y la expansión de programas de alternativas a la encarcelación. Por estudiar reformas legales, cambios de política, y otras estrategias inovadores, incluvendo algunos ya en progreso dentro del sistema federal, el "Task Force" espera ahorrar dinero en los gastos para correciones y hacer disponible más fondos para espacio adecuado y programas educativos. El "Task Force" se reunirá por última vez en septiembre del 2015.

El "Task Force" toma su nombre de Charles Colson, el fundador y primer presidente de Prison Fellowship y asistente personal durante la presidencia de Richard Nixon, Colson pasó unos meses en un campamento para prisioneros federales en Alabama por su parte en eventos relacionados al escándalo de Watergate. Jim Liske, el president de Prison Fellowship actualmente, sirve en el "Task Force" para representar la perspectiva de hombres y mujeres tras las rejas, ex-convictos, y sus familiares.

#### Miembros del "Task Force"

- Ex-Congresista J.C. Watts, Jr. (Presidente)
- Ex-Congresista Alan B. Mollohan (Vicepresidente)
- David C. Iglesias, Director del Centro Para Economía, Gobierno, y Política Pública de la Universidad de Wheaton
- Jim Liske, Presidente de Prison Fellowship (Confraternidad Carcelaria)
- Jay Neal, Director Ejecutivo de la Agencia de Transición, Apoyo, y Reingreso de Georgia
- Laurie O. Robinson, Asistente Fiscal General para la Oficina de Programas de Justicia
- Cynthia Roseberry, Directora del Proyecto de Clemencia Para la Asociación Nacional de Abogados Defensores
- Hon. Ricardo M. Urbina, Juez Federal Retirado, Corte de Distrito de Estados Unidos, Distrito de Columbia.
- John E. Wetzel, Secretarío del Departamento de Correcciones de Pennsylvania



# to por Sara Marlin

# Se Dedica una Capilla Nueva

USKEGON,
MI – Gente
de todas
religiones
—ya sean
musulmanes, cristianos, judíos,
budistas, sijes, o de cualquier
otra fe – tiene un lugar para orar
en la instalación correccional
Earnest C. Brooks (Earnest C.
Brooks Correctional Facility, una
prisión estatal en Michigan).

La capilla, llamada "suelo sagrado para todas las creencias" (Holy Grounds All-Faiths Chapel), fue construida con donaciones privadas y fue inaugurada el 17 de mayo del 2015. Servirá a todos los residentes de la instalación de seguridad mediana, los cuales, hasta ahora, han dependido del gimnasio y varios salones de clases para realizar sus actividades religiosas.

La capilla es la realización de una visión que la Directora de la prisión, Mary Berghuis, ha tenido latente por largo tiempo. Ella apreció la importancia de una capilla en la instalación correccional West Shoreline (West Shoreline Correctional Facility), la otra prisión que ha dirigido en Michigan. Ella cree que el tener un lugar dedicado a la

programación espiritual ayuda a los presos cuando terminan su tiempo de confinados.

"Oh, hace una diferencia muy grande," dijo la directora (Mary Berghuis) a un escritor para el Muskegon Chronicle, un periódico local. "Yo veo una diferencia en los hombres. Cuando ellos salen [de la prisión], su identidad es afectada."

"Muchos confinados, cuando les faltan las drogas y el alcohol en sus sistemas, sienten remordimiento y se ponen muy tristes," dijo Berghuis. "La capilla los ayuda a sobrepasar estos sentimientos."

Tomó mucho tiempo construir la capilla. La visión nació hace

"Les da un espacio apartado y lejos de las diarias asperezas de la prisión. Un lugar para escapar y practicar su fe."

Directora MaryBerghuis



Antes de la dedicación de la nueva capilla, Chuck Colson predicó a hombres en el gimnasio de la prisión en 2010.

más de una década; pero la reciente recesión económica dificultó la recolección de fondos. Además, en 2008, el constructor encargado del proyecto falleció inesperadamente.

Cuando por fin se inauguró la capilla, la señora Berghuis asistió a la ceremonia, que se efectúo un domingo al mediodía. También estuvo presente Dan Heyns, el director del departamento de correcciones de Michigan, y Jim Liske, el presidente de Prison Fellowship. Presos y ex-convictos también asistieron al evento.

"Considero esta capilla un

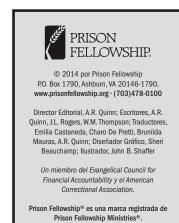
centro de oración que no es solamente para los reclusos de E.C. Brooks, sino también lo es para todos los ciudadanos," el señor Liske, que fue pastor en Michigan del Oeste, dijo al Muskegon Chronicle. "Porque si estos reclusos no cometen más crímenes, todos seremos beneficiarios."

"Los hombres que están tras las rejas tienen la capacidad de ser transformados, y de hacer que sus prisiones sean lugares más seguros—con un ambiente donde restauren sus vidas," añadió él, enfatizando la importancia de pasar bien el tiempo

de sus sentencias de la manera más productiva.

Además de los servicios de adoración, el nuevo edificio de la nueva capilla albergará la biblioteca religiosa E.C. Brooks y las clases del Instituto de Ministerio Urbano, un programa teológico que se ofrece en la prisión a candidatos que califiquen para ella. Este programa, administrado por voluntarios de Prison Fellowship en colaboración con la organización de misiones urbanas World Impact, ha existido en E.C. Brooks por varios años. Muchos de sus graduados sirven ahora como pastores laicos de la prisión.

Gracias a esta capilla, ellos tienen un buen lugar para practicar lo que están estudiando. ■



# PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS OUT TO STATE OF THE COLUMN TO STATE OF

# Seeking a Season of Peace

by A.R. Quinn

ronically, a national movement to reduce urban violence began with an act of bloodshed. One Thursday evening in 1992, hundreds of people from Boston's low-income Mattapan neighborhood gathered at the red-brick Morning Star Baptist Church to attend the funeral for the victim of a drive-by shooting. According to a story that appeared in The New York Times the following day, a dozen young men with sweatshirts pulled low over their heads interrupted the service. They singled out another young man, threw chairs at him, and stabbed him 8 times in front of the altar. Guns were fired in the sanctuary. Panicked people fled for the exits, and some, including small children, were injured in the stampede. It was later reported that the attack was gang-related.

At the time of the stabbing, Rev. Jeffrey Brown, then 30, was the pastor of an AfricanAmerican church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, near Boston. His goals were modest. In his own words from a presentation he gave earlier in 2015, he wanted "just to be a good pastor, to be able to be with people through all the passages of life, to preach messages that would have an everyday meaning for folks."

But the Morning Star incident, part of a steep rise in crime among the city's youth, changed the direction of the minister's life. Boston-area faith leaders, including Rev. Brown, came together to address a crisis they could no longer ignore.

#### **Street-Corner Conversations**

A small group of pastors decided to do something unusual. Just as violence had come into a church building, meeting them where they worked and lived, the pastors would go out to the streets, the source of the violence. They simply began to walk around in poor neighborhoods late at night, making



Rev. Jeffrey Brown, one of the architects of the "Boston Miracle," gives a presentation about crime reduction to an attentive crowd earlier in 2015.

connections with youth who were caught up in the culture of violence. The young people they met might never come to a church service, but the faith leaders could listen. They could learn to understand them better and help them find direction for their lives. Their conversations were profound.

As Rev. Brown later said, "I've learned some of my most

important life lessons from drug dealers and gang members and prostitutes, and I've had some of my most profound theological conversations not in the hal-

**Continued on page 2** 

# America's Least Likely Church

by Jim Liske

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hen Rev. Ambrose R. Hyland, a Catholic priest, came to

Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, New York, in 1937, there was no real place for prisoners to worship. Men gathered in a room under the mess hall. Father Hyland thought they deserved better.

The priest soon approached the warden with a request to build a church on prison grounds. It was a bold, ambitious plan; at the time, there was not a single, free-standing church in a prison anywhere in the United States. But Father Hyland with determined, and so were the prisoners whose hard work would turn the dream into reality.

Father Hyland and the prisoners ran into many obstacles.



The inside of the Church of the Good Thief at Clinton Correctional Facility

The first challenge was what to use for building materials. But as they looked around, the answer became obvious: they would recycle. There was plenty of stone available from the ruins of 19th-century buildings, including an old barn and the prison's original cell block. They would turn a former prison house into a house of God. Other materials were

donated; a formerly incarcerated mobster gave the wood for pews, and two Jewish brothers supplied an organ.

Prisoners worked diligently on the church for several years, and not a single disciplinary problem was recorded. Some discovered new talents. Carmelo Siraci, incarcerated for charges of forgery, turned his "artistic

flair" to a higher purpose. Using fellow prisoners as his models, he learned how to make the gorgeous stained glass windows that accent the church's walls.

The church was dedicated in 1941. It was called the Church of the Good Thief, St. Dismas, in honor of the thief who was executed next to Jesus and said, "Jesus, remember me when you

come into your Kingdom." (Luke 23:42) To this day, the Church of the Good Thief, one of the prettiest churches in the Adirondack Mountains, stands inside the tall, imposing walls of Clinton Correctional Facility. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.

#### **Rebuilt from Rubble**

Many centuries ago, a man named Nehemiah faced similar challenges with a building project. His people, the ancient Israelites, had been defeated in war and carried as captives to a distant country. Those who weren't dead or in exile struggled to survive in Jerusalem, their devastated capital, but the city's defensive walls had been torn down.

Nehemiah came back from exile determined to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. But how? The material he had was mostly rubble; the only workers available were despairing and downtrodden.

Continued on page 2

### **Letters to the Editor**

#### **Remembering Incarcerated**

I recently received a copy of your Inside Journal Spring 2015 newsletter. I found it very enlightening! However, when I read the two letters from former soldiers, my heart nearly broke! One was from C.H. in Mississippi and the other from D.G. in West Virginia. I have always had a soft spot for our veterans, as I remember the Vietnam days and how I wanted to do something for our servicemen. ... Their letters brought tears to my eyes.

- K.D., Missouri

#### **Colson Task Force**

The article in the summer issue on the Colson Task Force really hit home, especially since the problems identified in the federal prisons can be applied to the PA D.O.C. I was really surprised to see that the secretary of the PA D.O.C., Mr. John E. Wetzel, was on the panel. Mr. Wetzel knows what problems his department is facing, and his being on the Task Force gives me some hope that there could be real change in the PA D.O.C. after the Task Force has issued its report and recommendations.

- W.D., Pennsylvania



#### A Day With Mom

I am honored to say that today, something broke inside me because of a day known as Day with Mom through Prison Fellowship. I am completely shattered by the realization that we are so loved, even (especially) inside these walls. And that no matter what I have

done out there my past that caused this incarceration, I am accepted, forgiven, blessed, and loved, more than I could have ever known. See, all those years I spent out there busy getting high, running from myself and those who loved me, God had already seen, and let me assure you He causes all things to work together for our good. ... I admit, it is a daily struggle, especially inside this prison, when our fellow prisoners see only our flaws and do everything to upset us and draw us away from God's light. But today I realized that there is absolutely nothing greater than love, God's love, and the love our moms feel for us as we are in here and the love we feel for our children, when we must let them go after a two-hour or four-hour visit.

- E.G., Texas

#### **Least Likely Church** Continued from page 1

With a lot of prayer and a lot of perseverance, Nehemiah found success. Despite great opposition, and the odds stacked again him, he worked with the motley crew of survivors in Jerusalem to rebuild the city's walls. (You can read the whole story in the Old Testament book of Nehemiah.)

#### Life in a Broken World

Sometimes we hit a low point that makes us realize how truly broken we are and how broken the world is. We look around, we look inside ourselves, and we want to fix things, but what can we do if all we see everywhere is ... rubble? How can God make something beautiful from the misshapen remnants of our mistakes?

1. Realize God is not scared of your mess. God never said that you have to be a "good person" for Him to love you. In fact, He makes it pretty clear that none of us are good people without Him. Jesus compared Himself to a doctor who had come to treat spiritually sick people—not ones who were already healthy. And if you read the Bible, you'll see pretty quickly that many people God cherishes have checkered pasts. He's not intimidated by your rap sheet.

2. Give God what you have.

Maybe you have made a mess of a good thing in your life, or a lot of good things. You might be wondering what God could possibly do with your situation. That's O.K. Just give God what you have, no matter how broken. Ask Him to start working in your life. God can take your broken pieces, unlock their potential, and make something beautiful. That's what grace means.

3. Don't give up. It took a lot

of prayer and perseverance for Father Hyland and the prisoner workers to build the Church of the Good Thief. They needed to be creative and hard-working. They had to learn brand-new skills. They even had to stay strong through a court case challenging the constitutionality of a church building on prison grounds. But the end result was worth it: they had a beautiful place to worship, and an enduring testimony to the skill, ingenuity, and God-given dignity and potential of incarcerated people. When God rebuilds our lives from the ground up, He calls us to participate fully in what He is doing, continuing in spite of any obstacles that might come up. It's not always easy, but He promises to be with us, step by step and stone by stone. Along the way, you might find that He is also using you in ways you never dreamed, to heal your family, your community, and your world. Jim Liske is the president and CEO of Prison Fellowship Ministries.

#### **Subscription Info**

At Inside Journal® (IJ), we receive many letters each week from prisoners asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers-however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is only available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

#### **Season of Peace**

Continued from page 1

lowed halls of a seminary but on a street corner on a Friday night, at 1 a.m."

Slowly, the simple act of walking the streets and having conversations became a movement. The faith leaders began to see that young people could be collaborators in curbing violence. They started to partner with the Boston's gang unit and local schools. Violence dropped. From June 1995 to January 1998, there was not a single juvenile homicide in the city of Boston. Overall juvenile murders

"Leaders need to get together and say, 'Let's squash this beef."

2



to help "end the era of violence."

dropped 79 percent, a phenomenon that came to be known as the Boston Miracle.

Twenty years ago Rev. Brown help found the TenPoint Coalition, a faith-based crime reduction organization that came out of the lessons learned in Boston. He served as its executive director from 2007 to 2013. Since he stepped down, his commitment to stopping violence has not faltered. He now leads an organization called RECAP (Rebuilding Every Community Around Peace), and he travels around the country promoting "seasons of peace," formal periods when leaders

commit to a truce.

#### The End of an Era

Along the way, Rev. Brown visits prisons. He believes that men and women behind bars hold the keys to ending urban violence. "Season of Peace came out of conversations we had in jail, talking to incarcerated leaders with say-so," he explained in a recent interview with IJ. "We can end the era of violence, and there are people on the inside who can help make it happen. They need to know that there are people on the outside who believe in them."

He encourages those behind

bars to take whatever role they can in bringing an end to violence, whether than means mediating disputes or just banding together with others to take a stand for peace. "Leaders need to get together and say, 'Let's squash this beef," he says.

Rev. Brown has this encouraging message specifically for the readers of IJ: "There is value in building yourself up as an individual. That's important,

because some of the most intelligent, creative, wise people in the world are incarcerated. We need you out here. You are worth so much."

For juvenile readers he adds, "Keep your head up. People outside care about you and want to help you go in a new direction. You've made bad choices and moved into negative situations, but you can have newness in your life. It is possible." ■

# PRAYER WARRIORS CORNER



This fall, please pray for the following concerns:

• Pray for the physical safety of all people behind bars, but especially those who are engaged in dangerous occupations like firefighting.

"He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection." - Psalm 91:4

• Pray that God would establish His peace in the hearts of people in prisons and jails as well as on the streets.

"God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God." - Matthew 5:9

• Pray that state and national leaders would base criminal justice reform on the God-given worth of those who commit crimes and those who are harmed by them.

"... O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." - Micah 6:8

# Turning a Mess Into a Message

by Bill McCombes

t a low point in my life, I went to see Ethel "Sister" Lee. She was a kind, grandmotherly woman who lived in a little shotgun cottage in a not-so-great part of town. She stood less than five feet tall, but she was a giant when it came to spiritual insight. Pastors would often call her for help and prayer.

I went knocking on her door to seek her counsel, and she let me in. After taking me to her kitchen and setting a bowl, an egg, and a fork in front of me, Sister Lee

said, "Son, do you know how to scramble an egg?"

At the time I owned and operated nine restaurants. I liked to cook, and omelets were one of my favorite dishes to make, so I nodded.

"Show me," she said.

Taking an egg in one hand, I cracked it on the side of the bowl without breaking the yoke and gently let it slide into the bowl. I then begin to scramble it.

In the classic 1994 film, Forrest Gump's mother tells him that life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're going to get. At that time, my life seemed more like a box of choc-

olates that had been dumped into a blender. Every imaginable personal problem seemed to have erupted at once. After being a successful young entrepreneur worth over \$2 million by age 30, I was now facing divorce, my business was in bankruptcy, my house was in foreclosure, my car had been repossessed, and my father had been given less than one year to live. I was not sure what any of this had to do with scrambling an egg.

#### **An Impossible Task**

"Now, unscramble it!"

"Go ahead, unscramble the egg," she repeated.

After a few more moments of uncomfortable silence, I stammered, "I can't. I can't unscramble an egg."

small kitchen. I looked down at the bowl, filled with a very scrambled egg, and slowly turned my gaze back to her. As I looked into her eyes, it was as if I was looking into the heart of God. With guivering lips, I mumbled again, "I can't unscramble this egg."

Her next words cut straight to my heart. "Son, you can't unscramble eggs. You cannot go back and undo the broken, how hard you try, you cannot unscramble eggs."

"However, if you are willing to take the broken and scrambled times of your life and turn them over to God, He will take what ate a beautiful omelet. And you will be able to take that same

With a penetrating gaze of her deep blue eyes, Sister Lee said,

I stared at her, not understanding what she wanted.

A profound stillness filled the

scrambled places of your past. What's past is past. No matter

was meant to harm you and creomelet and feed others and help

#### **All Mixed Up**

No one can go back and undo the past, but God can give you a new beginning. He can take the pain of your history and turn it into something with value and purpose for the future. In fact, that's His specialty. If that idea sounds attractive to you, you can get started with a simple prayer from the heart.

Dear God, I've made a mess of things. I thought my way was best, but I've hurt myself and other people. Please forgive me. I give myself and all my baggage to You—do what You want with me, to turn my mess into Your message.

If you want to start a new life of forgiveness and wholeness by knowing God and following Him, *Inside Journal* wants to help. Through one of our partner organizations, you can receive a free correspondence Bible study, and an NIV Bible, if you don't have access to one, by writing to "All Mixed Up," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA, 20146-1790. The materials are available in English and Spanish.

them. With God's help, you will bring strength, nourishment, and help to many others. You cannot unscramble your mess, but you can take that same mess and turn it into a message that will help others."

#### **Free From the Past**

As tears rolled down my cheeks, I felt something crack and break open inside me. I didn't have to carry around the weight of my past anymore. With a deep breath, I filled my lungs with the hope of the future and looked once more at the scrambled egg. It felt as if a 90-pound backpack had been taken off of me. The mistakes and hurts of my past weren't just messes; God could take them and make them into something more beautiful and useful than I ever imagined. My past would no longer prevent me from living in my present or having hope for my future.

When I looked up, Sister Lee was back in her chair in the living

room. I'm not sure how long the tears fell off my chin into the scrambled egg, but when I left the kitchen, I had given all my past to God. I knew that I could become all that He had created me to be. I found great freedom in that decision that day. I knew my past would be transformed from a mess into a message, by the hand of God.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (NLT) No matter how scrambled the eggs of your life are, whether you, a friend, a relative, or even an enemy "scrambled your eggs," you can allow God to set you free from your past and turn your mess into a message.

Pastor Bill McCombes and his wife Nancy are founders of JesusQuest International, a ministry to prisoners, the homeless, and those in need.

No one can unscramble an egg, but God can unscramble the most mixed-up situation.

#### Doing HIS Time: Meditations and Prayers for Men and Women in Prison Foreword by Charles Colson

By James C. Vogelzang with Lynn Vanderzalm Revised Edition with Study Guides

#### **Doing HIS Time**

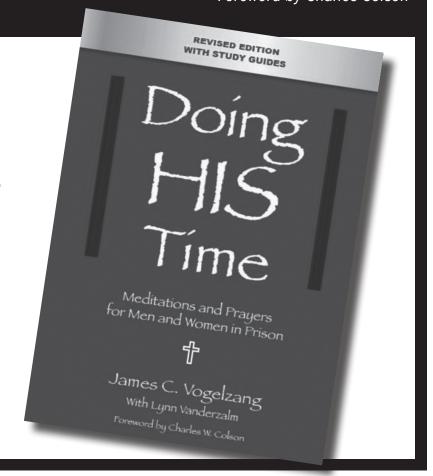
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## **Pope and President Visit Prisoners**

n recent months
President Barack
Obama and Pope
Francis have made
separate, historic visits to U.S. correctional facilities.
Their actions have helped bring
a national focus to the incarcerated population and boosted
efforts to reform the system.

#### President on "Fixing the System"

In July, during a week of speeches and events designed to bring attention to criminal justice reform, President Obama became the first sitting American president to go to a federal prison. He went to western Oklahoma's FCI El Reno, which houses more than 1,200 men in its main medium-security facility and a minimum-security satellite camp.

While at the prison, the president met with six men incarcerated for nonviolent drug offenses. The president's conversation with the prisoners was filmed for an HBO documentary hosted by Shane Smith, co-founder and CEO of VICE Media. The hour-long film, called "Fixing the System," was released earlier this fall.

In remarks to the press afterward, President Obama noted that his direct conversation with prisoners was the most poignant part of his visit. "When they describe their youth and their childhood," he said, "these are young people who made mistakes that aren't that differ-



Pope Francis washed the feet of prisoners outside Rome, Italy, when he first became the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

ent than the mistakes I made and the mistakes that a lot of you guys made. The difference is they did not have the kinds of support structures, the second chances, the resources that would allow them to survive those mistakes."

He added, "I think we have a tendency sometimes to almost take for granted or think it's normal that so many young people end up in our criminal justice system. It's not normal. It's not what happens in other countries."

The president said that he feels empathy toward prisoners, many of whom share a background similar to his. He grew up with a single mother and had only a limited relationship with his Kenyan father.

"There but for the grace of God," he said to reporters.

The president's July visit to

FCI EI Reno was part of a larger second-term push for justice reform. In the days prior, he gave a major speech about criminal justice to the NAACP and commuted the sentences of 46 nonviolent drug offenders.

#### Pope Visits Curran-Fromhold

Pope Francis, the head of the Roman Catholic Church, made his first visit to the United States in late September. Millions of American Catholics and admirers of the pope thronged his route as he made stops at the White House and Congress in Washington, D.C., and the headquarters of the United Nations in New York.

On Sunday, September 27, the pope stopped at a location less well-known to the world at large: Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a large facility with thousands of residents.

Pope Francis, a 78-year-old native of Argentina, met with 100 prisoners and members of their families in Curran-Fromhold's gymnasium. At the front of the room was a six-foot-tall walnut chair that prisoners had built especially for the pope's visit. The pontiff thanked them for it, saying, "It's very wonderful. [...] Thank you very much for the hard work."

Dressed in white robes and speaking in a soft voice, the pope, who has washed the feet of prisoners at other facilities in the past, shared about the scene in the Gospel of John when Jesus washed the feet of His followers.

The pope explained, "In those days, it was the custom to wash someone's feet when they came to your home. ... Everyone walked those roads, which left



President Barack Obama visited FCI El Reno in Oklahoma.

their feet dusty, bruised, or cut from those stones. That is why we see Jesus washing feet, our feet, the feet of his disciples, then and now."

"We know in faith that Jesus seeks us out. He wants to heal our wounds, to soothe our feet which hurt from travelling alone, to wash us clean of the dust from our journey. ... He doesn't ask us where we have been, he doesn't question us about what we have done. Rather, he tells us: 'Unless I wash your feet, you have no share with me' (John 13:8). Unless I wash your feet, I will not be able to give you the life which the Father always dreamed of, the life for which he created you. Jesus comes to meet us, so that he can restore our dignity as children of God. He wants to help us to set out again, to resume our journey, to recover our hope, to restore our faith and trust. He wants us to keep walking along the paths of life, to realize that we have a mission, and that confinement is not the same thing as exclusion."

Pope Francis encouraged all prisoners to support one another and take advantage of every opportunity for restoration and rehabilitation.

"[Jesus] comes to save us from the lie that says no one can change," he said. He helps us to journey along the paths of life and fulfillment. May the power of his love and his resurrection always be a path leading you to new life."

## **Prisoner Crews Tackle Wildfires**

#### by Steve Rempe

s the wildfires raging through much of California continue to stretch the abilities and resources of professional firefighters, assistance is coming from an unexpected source—men and women in the California corrections system.

As a record-setting drought dries out the state, 4,000 prisoners have joined forces with roughly 6,000 firefighting professionals in an attempt to tame fires that have burned hundreds of thousands of acres, destroyed property, and cost lives. Working for about \$2 a day, the prisoners are, in the words of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation spokesman Bill Sessa, "in the thick of it, cutting fire lines and helping to save large areas of California."

Jacques D'Elia served as a member of a similar fire brigade, fighting fires in the Mendocino National Forest for nearly three years between 2011 and 2013. After he was released, he reflected on the time spent in a fire camp in an interview with The Marshall Project, a nonprofit news organization focusing on the criminal justice system.

"It was so physically demanding—but I have to say, it was an honor, a privilege, and a gift to be doing it," D'Elia told The Marshall Project. "Every day, we wanted to prove we were better than the professional firefighters who were there. And it made me understand how much good I could do and how proud of myself I could be at the end of the day, which never happened in prison."

"I almost forgot I was incarcerated sometimes," he added." The staff treated you like a human, not a number."

The job is dangerous. As Sessa noted, "When you're actually in a fire—this is not a small grass fire, these are fires with flames 100 feet tall."

Still, many California prisoners volunteer for firefighting duties. The money is good by prison standards, and instead of cells, firefighting crews generally sleep in barracks-style accommodations. Prisoner-firefighters, who are carefully screened, go through two weeks of physical fitness training and then receive an additional two weeks of training from Cal Fire, a state agency. They are broken into teams of 12 and often take

on fire suppression projects, like breaking a path through vegetation in an effort to stop a fire in its tracks. Cory Sills, a California pris-

Cory Sills, a California prisoner interviewed for a public radio station, recalled one of his first mornings on a fire crew. He said, "The lieutenant comes out and he goes, 'Look, we'll treat you like men first, fire-

fighters second, and prisoners if we have to. That right there, that stuck in my head for two years now because now I have a chance to be treated like a man."

D'Elia also reported a good overall experience battling blazes.

"I truly believe that the fire camp saved my life," he said. "I had always struggled with drugs and alcohol, and I have been sober ever since that camp, which is partly because of AA but also because it made me appreciate myself, feel as though I had a purpose in me."



Despite the dangers, many incarcerated people in California volunteer to battle the drought-stricken state's frequent wildfires.



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## PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS OUT TO SUMME 25, NO. 1 WINTER 2016

## **Petty Thief Snatched by Grace**

by Zoe Erler

auline Rogers'
first experience
in a court room
was testifying
about her father's
murder. Then just 9 years old,
Pauline had watched her mother
shoot him.

"I helped her put him in the car," she admits. "He died *en route* to the hospital."

The court ruled it a case of self-defense, and Pauline's mother wasn't convicted.

After that, "my mother became a workaholic ... she was never around," Pauline remembers. And as a young girl growing up on Mississippi's Gulf Coast, Pauline began taking responsibility for her 10 younger siblings.

They were so poor, she explains, that she would look in the newspaper to find out which churches were having funerals. She would dress up her siblings and take them to the church, where they would always find a meal.

It wasn't long before she



Pauline felt responsible for her many younger siblings.

began stealing simple things to help provide for her family, like a bag of rice, meat, or hair bands.

"I stole from department stores, dollar stores, grocery stores ... if it was in walking distance from me, it was a target."

She was 11 the first time she was caught. At that point, the police officer just pulled her aside, explained that she shouldn't steal, paid for the stolen goods, and drove her home. But that wasn't enough to wake Pauline up. She was arrested a couple more times after that without facing serious consequences. But in her late twenties, her behavior finally caught up with her, and she landed a six-year prison sentence.

#### "I was not the Savior"

But sitting in county jail, even before she went to prison, Pauline met a Prison Fellowship volunteer who introduced her to Jesus.

That turned everything around, Pauline explains. The volunteer helped her realize that it was not her responsibility to take care of her siblings.

"I knew that I could depend on God. I was not the Savior ... it freed me," she says.

By the time she got to prison Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, Pauline was intent on taking advantage of every opportunity she could—particularly the programs offered by Prison Fellowship: life-skills training, discipleship, and mentoring opportunities. She also worked for the chaplain, a woman named Wendy Hatcher, who continued to mentor Pauline along her journey as a follower of Jesus.

Wendy said she noticed something special after meeting Pauline at a Bible study.

"I liked her a lot. I felt like I could trust her. She was intelligent and able to assist me in a lot of things."

Pauline helped Wendy with standard chaplain assistant tasks like paperwork, but Wendy also called upon her for assistance with more nuanced chaplain duties, like ministering to other prisoners.

**Continued on page 2** 

## **News of Note**

#### KY Gov. Restores Voting Rights

FRANKFORT, KY—Before he left office in late 2015, Steven L. Beshear, a Democrat and the outgoing governor of Kentucky, signed an executive order restoring voting rights to 140,000 people who had finished their sentences for nonviolent offenses.

Historically, in the Bluegrass State, anyone with a felony conviction lost their voting rights for a lifetime, unless a governor made a special, individual exception. Among the 50 states, only Florida and lowa still share that policy. Other states are following a trend toward relaxing voting restrictions for former prisoners.

At a press conference, Beshear said in defense of his decision, "Once an individual has served his or her time and paid all restitution, society expects them to reintegrate into their communities and become law-

abiding and productive citizens. A key part of that transition is the right to vote."

Advocates for progressive voting policies in Kentucky are still pushing for an amendment to the state constitution, which would have broader effects.

In addition to the 140,000 people who can now register as

voters, the executive order will eventually cover an estimated 30,000 people who are currently in prison or on probation. However, the order excludes those convicted of violent crimes, bribery, sex crimes, or treason, and those with new or pending charges. Those who are excluded may still apply for an exception from Kentucky's newly elected governor, Matthew Bevin.

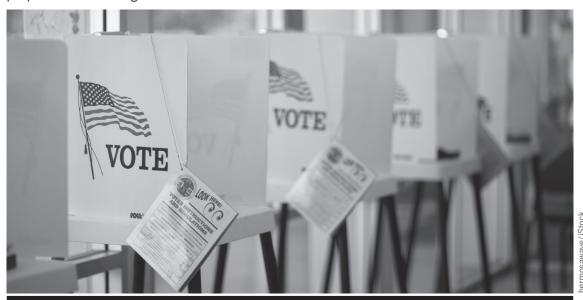
#### Prison Debaters Trump Harvard

NAPANOCH, NY—Men from a maximum-security facility in New York made international headlines when they defeated a debating team from Harvard University.

On September 18, 2015, members of the Bard Debate Union at Eastern Correctional Facility in the Catskills squared off against three undergraduate debaters from Harvard University. The Bard team, coached by David Register, spent countless hours preparing and practicing for the head-to-head debate about whether public schools should have the right to keep out undocumented children. Although they cannot use the Internet and must wait long periods for resources, the Bard team built a strong case for their side.

After the fast-paced, hour-long verbal battle, an independent panel of judges decided the winner. One judge noted that although both teams did an excellent job, the team from Harvard failed to respond to Bard's argument that because some public schools become "dropout factories" for undocumented students, denying them admission might encourage private and wealthier schools to pick up the slack and educate them better.

Though it was close, the panel of judges gave the win to the prison debaters. Register chalked the victory up to his



Thanks to an executive order, many people with a criminal record in Kentucky may now register to vote.

Continued on page 2

## A Fond Farewell

#### **Guest Column:** Jim Liske

On paper, my nephew should never have become addicted to drugs. He was a bright young man raised in a wonderful home by solid parents. And yet, he traded it all in for his substance abuse, leaving his heartbroken family behind when he went to prison.

My nephew's prison sentence changed his life and mine. In prison, he realized the severity of his situation. He was visited by a Prison Fellowship field director, and he learned to truly receive forgiveness for his past actions, grace for the present, and hope for the future.

My nephew's addiction and incarceration also led me into prison ministry. I learned firsthand how to empathize with the grieving families shattered by the fallout of a loved one's bad choices. I discovered what it means for parents of a prisoner to spend the holidays haunted by a child's absence, and for the first time in years of pastoral ministry, I took to heart Jesus' calling to visit those in prison.

My nephew has been out of prison for four years now. He

is sober, thriving at work, and continuing to grow spiritually. He is a husband and father.

I strongly believe that my nephew needed to go to prison. While it cost him a few years of physical freedom, it gave him a lifetime to celebrate God's grace. forgiveness, and restoration. And without his incarceration, I might never have known the tremendous joy of helping to bring men and women home from prison redeemed and renewed for God's purposes.

My time at Prison Fellowship has now drawn to a close as God calls me to serve people in other ways, but all of you and your families remain close to my heart. I am grateful for each of you that I had the opportunity to meet, serve, or learn from in some way. I will keep on praying for you.

I encourage you to make the most of this time. Though it may be difficult, it need not be a waste. As my nephew and countless other people have shown, a prison sentence can be a gift in disguise—a chance to begin again right where you are. God has created you with enormous value and purposeto know Him, to be loved by Him, and to grow to be more and more like His Son Jesus. That's something you can do anytime, anywhere.

For His Kingdom,



Jim Liske served as the CEO of Prison Fellowship from 2011 to 2015.

#### **Subscription Info**

At Inside Journal® (IJ), we receive many letters each week from prisoners asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers-however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is only available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

#### **Petty Thief** Continued from page 1

"If there was a death in an inmate's family, I would take her with me," Wendy says, so that Pauline could meet with the grieving prisoner to comfort them and help them through the process.

#### **Daughter Becomes Mother to Many**

Pauline did three years on a six-year term, and when she was released in 1987, Wendy allowed her to come and live with her in Jackson. Over time, Wendy had come to see Pauline as her daughter and wanted to provide a temporary home for her.

"I stole from department stores, dollar stores, grocery stores ... if it was in walking distance from me, it was a target."

2



With a new identity and a new purpose, Pauline has been giving back ever since she left prison.

Over the next four years, while she was living with Wendy, Pauline was hired by a doctora volunteer whom Pauline had met when she was in prison—to work as a janitor in her office. As Pauline proved herself, the office staff realized her potential to do more, and her responsibilities grew as she continued to work there for the next 27 years.

She also got involved with a church—New Horizon Church International—and married Fred, also a former prisoner whom she had met while incarcerated. She began volunteering with Prison Fellowship, going back into prison to minister and organizing Angel Tree, Under Pauline's leadership, New Horizon provides gifts to hundreds of children every Christmas through Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program.

With Fred, she even started her own ministry to others coming out of prison. Over the

#### **News of Note** Continued from page 1

men's tireless efforts. In an op-ed for The Guardian, a U.K.based newspaper, he wrote that the prisoners, who are furthering their education through the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI), "talk debate in their cells, the yard and the mess hall. They verbally spar with BPI students who are not on the debate team, and talk with their families-creating for themselves a group of informal coaches."

In part, the debate program is designed to help people behind bars gain a better understanding of civil society and how they

can help shape it for the better. "Many of our debaters openly express the desire to someday make positive contributions to society," Register wrote. "I have no doubt that they will."

The debaters also hope their story will improve public perceptions of the incarcerated and inspire other people behind bars to continue their education. Quoted in the Wall Street Journal, Alex Hall, 31, said the morning before the debate, "If we win, it's going to make a lot of people question what goes on in here. We might not be as naturally rhetorically gifted, but we work really hard." ■

#### **INTRODUCING** ...

# THE SECOND SISON

Sponsored by Prison Fellowship®

Exposure to the criminal justice system has become a part of life for many Americans. While punishment serves a purpose in creating a safe and security society, it should have clear limits. Those who are released from prison quickly realize how many obstacles still litter the pathway to a second chance. The "second prison" they encounter, made up of stigma, legal restrictions, and lost opportunities instead of concrete and razor wire, is familiar to millions. Even many people who found faith and renewed purpose while incarcerated lose hope a few steps past the prison gates.

In light of this reality, Prison Fellowship has launched The Second Prison Project. Led by Jesse Wiese, a one-time prisoner who graduated from law school, The Second Prison Project is an effort to create a national network of people who believe in second chances and are committed to ending the second prison through leadership, advocacy, and service, so that those who have completed their formal sentences can make a meaningful contribution to their communities.

Your family and friends can join the Second Chance **Network** to strengthen the movement and get updates on how to help end the second prison. Sign up at secondprison. org and like the Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/ secondprisonproject.

If you don't have Internet access but want to learn more, you can also write to Jesse Wiese, Director of The Second Prison Project, c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box, 1790, Ashburn, VA 20141-1790. Watch this space in future editions of Inside Journal for further updates.

#### **A Shiny New Penny**

Just recently, Pauline learned about an opening for a field director position at Prison Fellowship in Mississippi, and she jumped at the opportunity.

From a little lost girl to the director of a ministry that reaches out to families like hers. Pauline can only say that her life is one of amazing transformation.

"I feel like an old, dirty, crusty penny that was on the ground that no one wanted to pick up and people had trampled on. But somebody saw some value in that penny and picked it up and cleaned it up, and added more pennies to it. Prison Fellowship is just one more thing that is adding value to that penny."

past several years, Pauline and Fred have opened their home to around 20 ex-prisoners and have helped just as many get back on their feet.

Henry Daniels was one of those they helped.

Locked up for 34 years, Henry knew Fred when they were both in prison. When Henry was released in 2006, the Rogers gave him a temporary home and helped him get a job at a restaurant. Today, Henry has his own landscaping business and works parking lot security at New Horizon.

"They helped me get adjusted back to society. I don't know what I would have did if it hadn't been for them," he says.

## The Story Behind 'Amazing Grace'

by A.R. Quinn

n the last year of his life, Chuck Colson, the founder of Prison Fellowship, re-visited Maxwell Federal Prison Camp near Birmingham, Alabama, where he served time in the 1970s. While he was there, he gave a message to the men in the chapel. At the end, they all formed a circle around the edges of the room and joined hands. Chuck asked if they would sing "Amazing Grace" with him. He said that famous hymn was like "the prisoners' national anthem," because every time he went behind bars, the incarcerated men or women he visited knew all the words.

Many might be able to sing "Amazing Grace," but not everyone knows the story behind this beloved song. It was written in 1779 by John Newton, who was one of the most respected preachers in England at the time.

#### A Long Way Down

Newton wasn't always a spiritual leader. Born in London in 1725, he was the only child of a sea captain and a churchgoing woman. His mother taught him to read the Bible and go to services, but she died when Newton was seven years old. His father and stepmother did less to keep him on the straight and narrow, and he got into trouble many times, though he never forgot the lessons his mother taught him.

When he was 17, Newton fell hard for a young woman named Mary. He missed out on job opportunities to spend more time with her, and when he was 19, while traveling to see her, he fell victim to a "press gang," which meant he was forced to join the crew of a ship, where discipline was harsh, the food was bad and scarce, and his spirit was nearly broken. His mother's God seemed far away and uncaring. When he tried and failed to escape, the ship's captain had him stripped and flogged.

Later Newton was transferred to another ship, and he became involved in the brutal 18th-century slave trade. The work was horrific and cost many human lives, but at the time it was legal—and lucrative. Newton became known for his wild behavior (he almost drowned after falling off a ship during a party) and for openly mocking faith. He seemed as far away from God as he could get, but God had other ideas.

#### **A Turning Point**

In 1748, Newton was on board a slaving ship called the *Greyhound*. The ship was in bad shape. During a violent storm, it began to fall apart and take on water. A crew member had already been swept overboard. All night long Newton bailed to try to keep the ship from going under. While he did, he thought about the state of his life. He knew he had run from God, hurt other people, and made a wreck out of his own situation. He had even

mocked the Gospel. He realized he might die in the storm. Would God still be forgiving, even after Newton had rejected Him?

At last Newton recalled what his mother had taught him from the Bible: God loves to show mercy even to people who feel they are beyond redemption. Newton asked for God's help for the first time in years. He survived the storm.

#### **Transformed by Grace**

It didn't happen overnight, but Newton's life began to be transformed. He learned to pray. He found friends who shared his faith and could help him understand how it applied to his life. Eventually he gave up his role in the slave trade and stopped sailing for a living.

Instead, Newton, who had married Mary, studied to become a preacher. In 1764 he became the curate, or pastor, of a small English church. He wrote a widely read biography of his early years, and he also wrote hymns. "Amazing Grace," the one best known today, describes his very personal journey out of spiritual blindness into the light of God's grace.

In his later years, Newton



#### **Amazing Grace**

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me, I once was lost but now am found, Was blind, but now, I see.

'Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear. And Grace, my fears relieved. How precious did that Grace appear the hour I first believed.

**—John Newton (1779)** 

became the pastor of a larger church in London, where he helped lead many people to the God he had once mocked. He was also active in the movement to abolish the British slave trade. When the prime minister appointed a committee to investigate the slave trade, Newton was a key witness. He explained the horrors of the "industry" from the inside out, and his compelling testimony helped make the slave trade—and eventually slavery—illegal.

God's amazing grace is for everyone. Period. It applied to Chuck Colson, who, as Nixon's "hatchet man," had the reputation for being willing to "run over his own grandmother" to gain reelection. It applied to John Newton, who mocked God and captained a slave ship. It applies to you.

Jesus said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners" (Mark 2:17, NLT). If, like John Newton, you wonder whether God could forgive you, the answer is a resounding, "Yes!" He wants you to open your heart to Him so that you can be free from the weight of your past, experience His "amazing grace" for yourself, and realize your part in His plan.

If you want to learn more about God's grace, *Inside Journal* wants to help. Through one of our partners, you can enroll in a free Bible study course by mail. For more information, write to: "Amazing Grace," *Inside Journal*, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. The course is available in English and Spanish.



2016

"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him." – John 3:16-17 (New Living Translation)

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## Lose an Enemy, Gain a Friend

by W.M. Thompson

first started using drugs while he was in the U.S. Marine Corps. "It was a stressful time and drugs were an escape," he recalls. After his military service, Ron married his childhood sweetheart, Sharon, and opened an auto repair shop in Tennes-

see. While his business thrived,

his drug habit also escalated-to

the point of addiction.

on Hammer

One day Ron made plans to rob a man to buy about \$5,000 worth of crystal meth. It was November 14, 1986, and Phillip Robinson was working at his father's grocery store across town. Phillip's father, Wayne, had gone to the bank to deposit checks and would be returning with \$9,000 in cash.

When Wayne came back to the grocery store, Ron and an accomplice approached with guns drawn. Wayne tried to pry the gun out of Ron's hands, but it fired, loud enough for Phillip to hear. Ron quickly took the money and ran. When Phillip rushed outside to see what was happening, he discovered that his father had been shot. An ambulance took Wayne to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

#### No Escape

Ron and his accomplice were

arrested for the murder of Wayne Robinson. He posted bail and tried to escape by using drugs, just like he had in the military. Ron even attempted to end his life by shooting himself with a rifle-but the rifle moved when it fired. He was left with severe powder burns on his arms, yet his life remained intact. Undeterred, Ron attempted suicide twice more by crashing his plane and his car. Miraculously, he survived both times.

"I was trying to make a deal with God, 'Get me out of this, take it away," Ron recalls. As a car salesman, he was used to cutting deals. This time, however, Ron couldn't negotiate himself out of the consequences for his actions. Even though he insisted that he was innocent at trial, Ron was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison.

Stuck behind bars, Ron used smuggled prescription drugs and bucked up to everybody with a bad reputation. "I had nothing to lose," he says.

#### **Surrendering to God**

Meanwhile, Phillip was grieving the loss of his father. Despite Ron's conviction, Phillip struggled with thoughts of vengeance. "As a Christian I knew I needed to forgive Ron, but the fact that these men had not owned responsibility for the crime kept me stuck," he says.

Eight years after the murder,



Phillip (left) has formed an unlikely friendship with Ron (right), the man who killed his father in 1986.

Phillip was weary from resisting forgiveness, so he prayed. "I told God, 'If you want me and Ron to be side by side in heaven forever, that's O.K. I don't like the idea, but I surrender to that," Phillip recalls. After his prayer, he felt a release and didn't struggle with anger like he had before.

Ron's defenses began to crumble too. By 1996, he got sober and accepted Christ. But becoming a Christian didn't instantly solve all of his problems. He still had recurring nightmares about the murder. Plus, his wife grew tired of visiting him in prison year after year, so the couple divorced, and Sharon remarried.

"Being alone was taking a toll," Sharon recalls.

Worst of all was Ron's guilt over taking a man's life. He prayed for years before he finally heard a voice: You still haven't

confessed to the Robinson family.

#### **An Unlikely Friendship**

Desperate to be set free from his guilt, Ron wrote a letter of confession and sent it to Wayne's widow, Delores. After 21 years of denying the truth, Ron admitted he was the one who had pulled the trigger.

The letter was unsettling for Delores and Phillip. They had believed Ron's accomplice killed Wayne. However Phillip, at that time a new pastor, felt compassion for Ron.

"I wrote back and thanked him for his courage. I said that as a Christ follower I have been forgiven, so in turn I can forgive him," he says.

When Ron read Phillip's letter, he bawled. "I didn't realize I wanted Phillip's forgiveness until I received it," Ron recalls. From that day forward, Ron was a changed man. His nightmares stopped, and he felt less animosity toward gang members with whom he formerly had conflicts with. "After I received Phillip's forgiveness, I forgave them," he says.

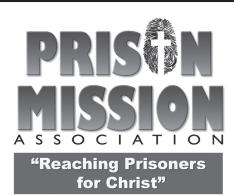
Hungry to learn about Jesus, Ron sent Phillip more letters, asking him about the Bible. Soon, through letters, Phillip was mentoring the man who had killed his father. Phillip says that his friendship with Ron is evidence of God at work. "You don't do that, you don't pray for people who killed your family," he says. "It's extraordinary—a work of God."

#### **Spreading the Word**

In 2014, Delores and Phillip spoke on behalf of Ron at his first parole hearing, explaining that they had forgiven Ron and it was time to move on. Ron was required to undergo a psychological evaluation and attend a second hearing before he was deemed eligible for parole.

Last year Ron was released from prison. Soon after, Phillip visited Ron, and they greeted each other with an embrace. The men have since shared the story of their friendship at churches and conferences. Sharon divorced her second husband and remarried Ron in October. "Honestly, he's the love of my life," she says. Currently, Ron and Phillip are writing a book together about the power of forgiveness.

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Editor, A.R. Quinn; Writers, Zoe Erler, Jim Liske, W.M. Thompson, A.R. Quinn; Graphic Designer, Sheri Beauchamp

A member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, and the American Correctional Association.

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## PRISON FELLOWSHIP'S NEWSPAPER FOR AMERICA'S PRISONS OUT TO SPRING 2016

## The Street to Deliverance

by A.R. Quinn

OUSTON, TX—The streets are no place for a kid on his own.

But by the time he was 15, Arthur Medina, a runaway, had no address, no security, and no real plan. So he turned to crime in hopes it would help him survive. He earned a living by stealing cars and running them across the border into Mexico.

Before too long, things went wrong. During a failed carjacking attempting, Arthur took someone's life. He was just 17, and after being convicted of the crime, he was staring down a life sentence. It would be 20 years—two decades' worth of birthdays and Christmases—before he was even eligible for parole.

"I felt my life was over," he says.

But things were about to get even worse. Though Arthur was young, he made up for his vulnerability with fury. When a



Arthur Medina (right) poses with Rick (left), the employer who was willing to take a chance on him after he was released from a Texas prison in 2011.

fellow prisoner tried to sexually assault him, Arthur fought him off with a vengeance. He nearly killed him. That got another 119 years tacked onto his sentence—including 15 years in solitary.

#### At the Crossroads

In 1989, a prosecutor came to visit Arthur and challenged with a simple question: "Do you believe in God?"

Arthur felt something stirring in his heart at the question.

"Yes, I do," he responded.
"Then why don't you get to

"Then why don't you get to know Him?" the prosecutor suggested.

Shortly after, Arthur began reading the Bible. He felt like his life needed to get on a new path, but he knew it wouldn't be easy. The gang he had joined in prison would not support his desire to do things God's way.

"I had to decide if I wanted to continue down the path of destruction or the path of deliverance," he remembers.

Arthur chose God's way. His

Continued on page 2

## The Victims No One Sees

by Mary Ellen Armbruster

he young man in the orange jumpsuit held his face in his hands. The tattoo on one hand read "defiant."

"If only I'd been there with him—if only!" His shoulders began shaking as he buried his sobs, grieving the death of his father. There are few words that can bring comfort in moments like these.

As a prison chaplain, I often have the difficult responsibility of delivering news many prisoners dread: a loved one has died. I am always left raw from seeing how such news can rock a world, reducing the most hardened criminal to a puddle of devastation. It makes no difference whether the receiver is a drug addict or a serial killer—the reaction is usually the same. And my heart breaks with theirs every time.

Suffering far away from your loved ones is a cruel reality of prison life, but it runs both ways.

I also work as a Prison Fellowship program support specialist. I often find myself on the phone, listening to the tears of a mother, father, grandmother, or spouse as they share their desperation for their loved one behind bars. Often, they are wondering where their loved one is, what he's going through, who she's locked up with, or what they did wrong. One mother told me, "When my son went to prison, I went to prison." Everyone wonders if they will ever get

beyond the pain.

Once a month, I also facilitate
a program called Hope's Gate, a
phone-in support group for fami-

ated. Though the voices from all across the country are different, the stories and pain are the same. On those calls, I realize

lies of those who are incarcer-

Inside and outside prison, prisoners and their families share similar feelings of grief and helplessness.

I am speaking with the "other victims." They are the ones who never get written about in newspapers-the family members who have watched their loved ones going downhill, been to countless court hearings, sunk their life savings into attorney fees or rehab programs, and who are raising the children incarcerated parents leave behind. These are the ones who will take another job to make ends meet in their old age. And while some may be partly to blame for their loved one's road to prison, they

also suffer in this journey.

Being both a chaplain and program support specialist offers me a unique, dual perspective that few people get to have. I see how prisoners are hurting, but I also see their loved ones' pain. Both groups feel alone, but both groups can benefit from the comfort God offers. As a prison chaplain I tell people behind bars that the ground is

Continued on page 2

## **Letters to the Editor**

I'm currently serving a 25year sentence and have been locked up since 2009. It's been a tough road with my family abandoning me and no contact with my children all this time either. ... I haven't seen or heard from my grandma since 2007 and one day I just wrote her a letter asking for help. I didn't know her house numberjust her street and town. Well, I prayed and sent off that letter, and now my grandma found me. ... She'll be coming to see me soon as well as my aunt. God is so amazing.

-J.S., Florida

I wanted to let you know that you have helped me in a very special way. I have been locked up since 2010. I have two sons of whom I have not seen since my incarceration. Their mother and I have been separated before I came to prison, but this really severed any and all communication with her. I would write my kids every month with little if any response. I did not know what was going to become of my relationship with my kids. Being in prison is hard enough, but having kids and being in prison, well that's enough to break any grown man. I have been signing my kids up for Angel Tree since 2012. I



thought that if nothing else at least I could be a part of their Christmas through Angel Tree. However, this hope started to fade quickly at the beginning of 2016. With no visits or letters from them I was starting to question God on why He would let this happen. ... On 2-11-16, I heard from God. When I got back to my dorm, I saw that I had mail. It was a letter from

my kids' mother along with two pictures of my sons, along with letters from each one of them. ... She is going to bring them to visit me as well. God used the

... She is going to bring them to visit me as well. God used the loving, caring people at Angel Tree to reconcile a father to his children.

- B.M.

Once upon a time I would have tried to sell drugs to provide for my family ... [But God] has renewed my thinking, trusting Him for a gift for Timothy. My new family in Christ provided Him a gift. Not only did he receive a gift but his mother was told about the love of Christ ... Your benevolent actions demonstrate that people still care in a world I left some time ago. I'm inspired to stay in touch with my family and love them with the agape love Christ taught by how He lived His life.

- R.R.

#### **Subscription Info**

At *Inside Journal®* (*IJ*), we receive many letters each week from prisoners asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers—however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, *IJ* is *only* available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

#### Victims Not Seen Continued from page 1

level at the foot of the cross—in God's eyes we have all messed up, and we all need His help. And as a program support specialist, I love being able to share the same message of forgiveness with the people who call in week after week, searching for hope, trying to find a way to work through the experience of having a loved one incarcerated.

If you find yourself wondering how you can support these under-recognized victims, here are a few suggestions:

- 1. Invite God into your journey and ask Him to show you what you need to own—not just what the court says, but what you truly need to accept responsibility for. Stop blaming others, and then give your situation and yourself to God. The Bible tells us that if we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive us our sins (1 John 1:9). Remember, there's no reformation without transformation! (To learn more, read the article at the top of page 3).
- 2. Write to your loved one and tell them you're sorry—and mean it. Ask them to forgive you for your poor choices and actions. Remember, you can't be responsible for how they react, but you can be responsible for what you say and do.

  3. Seek out Bible study groups and life-skills pro-

grams within your prison to

grow beyond your current state. If you wait until you get out, you'll never do it. You may need to speak with a chaplain or program manager to find out what is available to you. 4. Whether you are a Christian or not, surround yourself with people who share positive values. We become like the people around us, and it's important to associate with people who have their eyes set on living differently. 5. And finally, pray for your loved ones. God is able to do far greater things than we can imagine, and our prayers do not go unheard (Ephesians 3:20-21).

On a recent Hope's Gate call, I told the callers that they have the freedom to share or not, realizing many are hesitant because they fear judgment. In the last 15 minutes, we took prayer requests. From the hidden corners of the telephone connection, I heard a tearful voice that had not spoken before say, "Could you please pray for my grandson? I love him so very much and worry about him."

Another unseen victim, this grandmother has not given up on her grandson, separated from her by prison bars and poor choices. In those remaining moments, we all tapped into the One who could bring the answers and turn everything around!

#### **Deliverance**

Continued from page 1

difficult decision immediately got him in trouble with his old gang, but a new future was opening up.

Arthur was released from solitary confinement in 2003. He immediately sought out the prison chaplain so he could learn more about his new faith. He also began to take college courses and studied the Bible day and night. Nothing could shake his determination to think in a positive way, not even when he was denied parole the first time.

"I had to learn that God's not concerned with happiness, but with His purpose being ful-



The intensive, faith-based reentry unit at the Carol Vance Unit in Texas gave Arthur a positive environment to confront the past and prepare for the future.

"I had to decide if I wanted to continue down the path of destruction or the path of deliverance."

filled," Arthur now recalls.

Five years later, he came up

for parole again.

Reviewing his exemplary behavior, one member of the parole board noted, "You were the worst inmate in the beginning, and since 2003, you have an impeccable record. What happened?"

Arthur responded the only way he knew how: "Ma'am, I now believe in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior."

The parole board recommended that Arthur be transferred to an intensive Prison Fellowship reentry program. Seven days later, he was on his way to the Carol Vance Unit.

#### **Dealing With the Past**

Arthur made the most of what the program had to offer, even when it meant confronting the painful realities that had driven him to the streets in the first place. "I felt like I had been abandoned and thrown out like trash by my mother," he remembers. "And my father ...he preferred alcohol over me."

In 2011, Arthur walked out the gates a free man and completed the post-release phase of the reentry program.

"God took my mess and turned it into a miracle," Arthur says with joy.

Since his release, Arthur has worked on building the life he

missed out on before. He is the vice president of operations at a ventilation company, and he trains and manages a team of 15 to 20 people. At work, Arthur makes sure his team knows that he cares about them and what is going on in their lives. Recently, he even helped a colleague strengthen his marriage.

Arthur got married himself a few years ago. Together, he and his wife are helping to raise their niece. She was having trouble in school when she came into their Texas home, but now she is on the honor roll.

Sometimes Arthur still thinks about the past—the first fright-ening days on the streets, the things he did, and the endless hours in solitary. But in the end, he's grateful.

"I do regret things in the past and wish I could undo them," he says. "But that was a little boy that was lost, who had a lot of issues to deal with. Sitting in a cell was supposed to be the end of the road for me. Yet God pierced through the dark abyss and shed a ray of hope that sustained me."

Arthur also goes back into a prison near his home to help lead Bible study. For all the people still behind bars, he has a message: "Live your life on purpose. Make everything count. God will work it out for the good no matter the circumstances or situation you are in."

## A New Name, a New Family

by Zoe Erler

long before he saw ours.

Three years ago, we saw his picture for the first time. An 18-month-old toddler with no known parents and no known name. From the other

e knew his face

dler with no known parents and no known name. From the other side of the world, we gave him a name. We became his parents. He became our son.

And three years later, when he was 4-and-a-half years old, we held him in our arms for the first time. The little boy we had known all along finally started getting to know us—his "Mommy" and "Papa."

It is a story of adoption. It is a story of the lost being found. It is a story about God.

#### **A Long Pursuit**

You see, from the day my husband and I began the long journey to make a little boy from halfway across the world our son, I began to realize that adoption was just as much about us as it was him. We had pursued our son through hours of grueling paperwork, dozens of foster care fees, and countless prayers. In a similar way God, my Heavenly Father, had been pursuing me since before the world was made, long before I existed.

In the Psalms, a writer named David describes how God knew him long before he was even conceived: "You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed" (Psalm 139: 15-16, NLT).

As the days and weeks passed, and unexpected legal and bureaucratic delays made the adoption of our son drag out, we were faced with the reality that this adoption would end up costing us more than we had anticipated. Every month that we could not bring him home was one more month of payments to our son's foster care familymoney we wished we could have been putting toward his college fund instead. Still, our son was worth it, and we were willing to pay whatever it took to have him well cared for in our absence.

Similarly, when God decided to make me His child, he did so at the ultimate cost to Himself; He adopted me at the expense of His Son's life. The Bible says that we are all orphans, lost and alone without a Heavenly Father, and that God willingly sacrificed His own Son Jesus—His beloved child—to make orphans like you and me His dear sons and daughters.

In Romans 8:32, the Apostle Paul describes the lavishness of God's love for us: "Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?"

God was willing to pay for our lives at the cost of His most pre-

cious possession—His Son. The cost my husband and I incurred to adopt our son cannot even begin to compare.

#### **Adjusting to a New Reality**

Now that our son is safely home, we are adjusting to life as a new family. Particularly, our son is adjusting to life in a new continent, culture, and climate. Some days, he is happy and content. Other days, he is confused, angry, and sad. Some days, he wraps his arms around me and whispers in my ear that he loves me. Other days, he turns away from me, ignores what I say, or openly disobeys me. And despite my many failures as a parent, I do my best to love him with firmness and kindness no matter how he is treating me.

Often in our relationship with God, we are fickle, too. Some days, we sidle up next to Him with praises on our lips. Other days, we'd rather have nothing to do with Him. Similar to what my son feels, coming into God's family sometimes feels happy, sometimes scary, sometimes

#### **Beginning to Belong**

We all need to have a sense of belonging. God offers us a place in His family—as His adopted, fully loved and accepted children. If that's a relationship you want to pursue, you can start with words from your heart.

Dear God, I feel lost and alone, like a child with no home. I want to be part of Your family. Thank You for Jesus' sacrifice to pay the way for me to be adopted as Your child.

If you want to start a new life as a part of God's family, *Inside Journal* wants to help. Through one of our partner organizations, you can receive a free correspondence Bible study, and an NIV Bible, if you don't have access to one, by writing to "Beginning to Belong," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA, 20146-1790. The materials are available in English and Spanish.

confusing. Often He asks us to do things that seem foreign, strange, and difficult. Rather than obey Him, we turn away and do our own thing. And on our worst days, we even run full-speed away from Him or fight against Him, much the way my son often fights and pushes against me. Thankfully, the Father's love is not dependent on our affection or attitude toward Him.

In fact, Paul says that "God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners" (Romans 5:8, NLT).

Over and over again, the Bible talks about how much God cares for orphans. He is described as "a father to the fatherless" (Psalm 68:5). He cares for the literal orphans, those like my son with no known biological parents. But He cares for spiritual orphans as well—those like you and me who, through sin, have given up our relationship with our Heavenly Father. We are the "fatherless" who need to be adopted.

I'm so thankful that God chose to adopt me and give me a new name—His name—and a new family, the family of God. What about you? Do you need to be adopted, too?



## Colson Task Force Issues Report

WASHINGTON, D.C.-In late January, the Charles Colson Task Force on Federal Corrections announced its recommendations to Congress and the president. Congress formed the task force in 2014 to look into challenges in the Federal Bureau of Prisons, especially overcrowding, and come up with policies to help solve them. The task force is named after Charles Colson, the disgraced "hatchet man" of the Nixon White House who started Prison Fellowship in 1976 after serving a 7-month sentence.

Craig DeRoche, the senior vice president for advocacy and public policy at Prison Fellowship, who served on the task force, said, "We thank Congress for making criminal justice reform a priority and for its bipartisan collaboration, along with the president, on this important work. The task force upholds Chuck Colson's and Prison Fellowship's belief in the inherent value and dignity of each human life, which means that once people have paid their debt to society through a proportional punishment, they are capable of ... making significant contribution sin their communities."

The Task Force's recommendations cover a lot of ground.

Available in a full report called "Transforming Prison, Restoring Lives" at colsontaskforce.org, they fall into six major categories:

- 1. Reserve prison time for those convicted of the most serious crimes, making use of alternative sentencing in less serious cases.
- 2. Promote a culture of safety and rehabilitation in prisons.
- 3. Give prisoners incentives to complete programs that reduce

their risk of committing another crime.

- 4. Make use of policies that have been proven to help people succeed when they are released to probation or parole.
- 5. Make sure corrections agencies share the best ideas and are more transparent.
- 6. Use the money saved to improve programs, supervision, and treatment.

The Task Force's recommendations for improving the federal prison system are just that-recommendations. They don't automatically become law or change policies in place now. But they are still important for two reasons: 1) They show that there more people are agreeing about the importance of making prisons safer and more effective; and 2) the recommendations are being shared with lawmakers, and advocacy groups are pushing to make them a reality in the future. It is estimated that if the recommendations were all put into place, the number of people in federal prisons would fall by

60,000 by 2024, helping with overcrowding and saving taxpayers \$5 billion.

The recommendations go farther than any laws Congress is considering right now, but some proposals, like the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act, do embrace the task force's main principles. DeRoche has publicly thanked members of Congress, including Rep. Goodlatte of Virginia and Sen. Grassley of lowa, for their leadership in criminal justice bills that are making their way through the lawmaking branch of government.



Members of the Charles Colson Task Force on Federal Corrections present their findings and recommendations at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., earlier this year.

oto provided by Prison Fellowship

#### **Behind the Angel Tag**

A Q&A with Angel Tree's National Director

by A.R. Quinn

Nationwide, one out of every 28 kids has a parent behind bars, resulting in many separated families. Since 1982 Angel Tree®, a Prison Fellowship program started by a former bank robber, has given parents an opportunity to restore and strengthen relationships with their children.

In 2015, more than 300,000 children were matched with local churches and organizations that gave children Christmas presents on behalf of parents behind bars. Each gift delivered to a child represents a complicated process—starting with incarcerated parents.

At every step of the process, Charles Rock, the national director of Angel Tree programs, makes sure the giant operation runs as smoothly as possible. Recently *Inside Journal* caught up with Charles to give our readers the inside scoop on how—and why—he does his unusual job.

IJ: Your job has a lot of moving parts. How would you sum it up?

Charles: I oversee all of the operations and program development for Angel Tree. To be successful in

my job is to have all of the eligible Angel Tree children assigned to a local church or organization.

IJ: What prepared you for this job?

Charles: I was with AOL previously for about 10 years. ...

Around 2009 I started to feel a tug to do something that matters. Success at AOL was measured on money generated, advertising, page views, that sort of thing. That's fine. I wanted to do something else.

The only job that came up that I was interested in was to be the national director for Angel Tree.
The head hunter thought I was out of my mind; the pay was much lower. But I never wanted anything else. I really had to trust and lean on God.

IJ: How did you find out about Angel Tree?

Charles: I was already familiar with Chuck Colson, the founder of Prison Fellowship. I had read some of his books. As soon as I found out about the position, I immersed myself in learning what Angel Tree is all about: restoring and strengthening prisoners' families. I also became the coordinator the for Angel Tree program at

my church. I've been doing that for 5 years. That's given me a really good perspective on seeing the program from the ground and all the challenges associated with it—and the blessings as well.

IJ: It's only spring, but the deadline for Angel Tree applications will be here soon. Why so early?

Charles: The deadline is early because when you are receiving 200,000 applications with tons of data, it's very complex. The applications all go over to a partner who enters them into our system. Then we have to validate the data, figure out what's not there, what's needed, so we can match children with a church. Churches actually want to have the lists earlier. We have actually made the deadline as late as we possibly can for the prisoners and still have a good chance of assigning children to churches.

IJ: A moment ago you mentioned challenges. I understand that sometimes, even when a parent submits the application on time, a child might not receive a gift. Why?

Charles: There are several reasons a child might not receive a gift. It could be that the application was incomplete, or we lacked information that was needed to make a delivery. Sometimes the church cannot locate the family because

they have moved. Or the family doesn't want to participate for some reason. Occasionally there are not volunteers living close enough to serve the child, but last year, over 99 percent of all eligible Angel Tree children were assigned to a church or organization.

IJ: Why are only children and step-children eligible—not grandchildren?

Charles: In order to serve the parents, the step-parents, and their children efto celebrate the birth of fectively. our Lord Jesus Christ, we - LUKE 2:8-14 need to focus on our core mission. We don't have the resources to expand it beyond that.

IJ: Do you have kids, and do you ever imagine what would happen if you were incarcerated?

Charles: I have four kids, two boys and two girls. My kids are 16, 13, 11, and 8.

There was a time in my earlier life when I was waiting to get

caught, and I never was, and certainly I see a lot of me in this. It's very easy to make bad choices and have these things happen. It doesn't mean that you don't love your kids and that your kids don't love you. You should be able to keep a connection.

IJ: Angel Tree is a lot of work—for volunteers and for you. To be blunt, what's in it for you?

Charles: What's
in it for us is we
are blessed beyond description to get
to do this.
That might
be hard to
get, but it's
true. I feel
blessed
because
I am a

dad, too, and I get to connect parents who love their children and children who love their parents. I get to be a

pathway. That means a lot to me, and I know it means a lot to all the folks involved in Angel Tree. I have a particular calling to do that because I am a parent, and because I understand. I have a couple folks in my family who have been incarcerated, and they have families as well.

## Connect with Your Child This Christmas!

#### What Is Angel Tree?

Maybe you've heard of Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program, but you're not sure how it works. Angel Tree is a simple way to let your children know that you are thinking about them at Christmas.

Angel Tree works like this: Applications are shipped to the chaplains of participating prisons in early June. You fill out an application asking Angel Tree to give your child a gift from you at Christmas (you can suggest what kind of gift you think your child would like). Your chaplain collects all the applications and sends them to Angel Tree by the deadline. In the fall, Angel Tree volunteers call the person who takes care of your child to verify what gift your child would like to receive. Before Christmas, Angel Tree volunteers will buy and wrap the gift. The gift will be delivered to your child's home or given to your child at an Angel Tree Christmas party along with a presentation of the Gospel. Your child will be told that the gift is from you-their mom or dad who loves them! Plus, your brief, personal message to your child will be written on the gift tag.



#### A Gift from Your Heart to Theirs ...

This summer is the time to sign your children up to receive a Christmas present from you through Angel Tree. **Applications for Christmas 2016 must be postmarked by September 6, 2016.** Ask your chaplain or program coordinator for an application, and either the chaplain or program coordinator must submit it for you when you are done.

There are some important restrictions to the Angel Tree program, so please read carefully before filling out an application:



- 1) You **must** be the child(ren)'s father, mother, stepfather, or stepmother.
- 2) There **must not be a court order** restricting your contact with the child(ren) or their caregiver(s).
- 3) Your child(ren) must live in the United States.
- 4) Your child(ren) must be 18 years old or younger.
- 5) The form must be filled out **completely and legibly.**
- 6) The form must be signed.
- 7) The form must be **postmarked by September 6, 2016.**

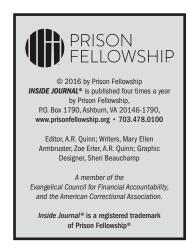
Start preparing now to sign up your children by contacting their caregiver to gather the most current information for your application.

Get an application and sign your kids up today! A special gift from you at Christmas will help them know that you love them, and it will connect them with a church that can come alongside your family in your absence. Best of all, it will give them an opportunity to experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

Angel Tree makes great efforts to serve every eligible child. Sometimes, however, if we are unable to locate your children's caregiver, if the caregiver refuses to participate, or if there are not enough Angel Tree volunteers in a local area, we may not be able to deliver gifts to your children.

If your facility is not signed up and has not received applications, your chaplain may contact **1-800-55-ANGEL** for more information on how to participate.





#### EN ESPAÑOL NSIDEOUTI **EL PERIÓDICO DE PRISON FELLOWSHIP** VOLUMEN 4, NO. 1 **PRIMAVERA 2016**

## La Vía a la Salvación

Por A.R. Quinn

calles no son lugar para un joven por su cuenta. Pero para ese momento él tenía 15 años de edad. Arthur Medina. un ioven fugado de casa, sin domicilio, sin seguridad o algún plan real. Así que el recurrió al crimen en la esperanza que le ayudaría

sobrevivir. Él se ganaba la vida

robando automóviles y cruzán-

dolos por la frontera a México.

OUSTON, TX-Las

En poco tiempo las cosas se pusieron mal. Durante un intento de secuestrar un vehículo Arthur tomó la vida de alguien. El solo tenía 17 años, y luego de ser condenado por el crimen, él enfrentaba una sentencia de vida. Sería de 20 años-dos décadas de cumpleaños y Navidades-antes de ser elegible de una libertad condicional.

Él declara, "Yo sentía que mi vida había terminado."

Pero las cosas estaban a



Arthur Medina (derecha) posando con Rick (izquierda), el empleador que estaba dispuesto en probar suerte con él luego de ser liberado de una prisión en Texas en 2011.

punto de empeorar aún más. Aunque Arthur era joven, él compensaba por su vulnerabilidad con la furia. Cuando otro prisionero intentó agredirlo sexualmente, Arthur luchó con él con venganza y casi lo mató. Eso causó que agregaran otros 119 años a su sentenciaincluyendo 15 en confinamiento solitario.

#### En la Encrucijada

En 1989 un fiscal vino a visitar a Arthur y lo desafío con una pregunta sencilla: "¿Cree usted en Dios?"

Arthur sintió algo como una emoción en su corazón al escuchar la pregunta.

Él respondió "Si, yo creo en

"¿Luego, por qué no lo has conocido?" sugirió el fiscal.

Poco después, Arthur comenzó a leer la Biblia. El sentía como si su vida necesitaba un nuevo camino, pero sabía que no sería fácil. La pandilla con la que se había unido en la prisión no apoyaría su deseo

Continúa en la pág. 2

## Las Víctimas Ocultas Sienten Dolor

#### **Por Mary Ellen Armbruster**

I hombre joven en el overol color naranja sostenía su rostro en sus manos. El tatuaje en su mano derecha leía "desafiante."

"Si yo solo hubiera estado ahí con el - ¡Si solo!" Sus hombros comenzaron a temblar mientras que ocultaba sus sollozos, afligido por la muerte de su padre. Existen pocas palabras que pueden traer confort en momentos como estos.

Como el capellán de una prisión, con frecuencia tengo la responsabilidad difícil de transmitir noticias que muchos prisioneros temen: ha muerto un ser amado. Yo siempre quedo crudo al ver como tal noticia puede mover un mundo, reduciendo al criminal más templado a un charco de devastación. No hay diferencia en que el receptor sea un drogadicto o un asesino en serie-la reacción

es usualmente la misma. Y con ellos se me rompe el corazón cada vez.

Sufrir lejos de sus seres amados es una cruel realidad de la vida en prisión, pero va en ambas direcciones.

También trabajo como especialista en un programa de apoyo de Confraternidad Carcelaria. Con frecuencia me encuentro en el teléfono escuchando las lágrimas de una madre, un padre, una abuela o conyugue a medida que

comparten su desespero por su ser amado entre rejas. Ellos a menudo se preguntan dónde se encontrará su ser amado, por que estará pasando, con quien se encuentra encarcelado, o que fue lo que hicieron mal. Una madre me contó, "Cuando mi hijo fue a la prisión, yo fui a la prisión." Todos se preguntan si en algún momento irán más allá del dolor."

Una vez por mes vo también facilito un programa denominado Hope's Gate (El Portón de



Dentro y por fuera de la prisión, los prisioneros y sus familias comparten sentimientos similares de pena y de impotencia.

la Esperanza), que es un grupo de apoyo por medio telefónico para las familias y aquellos que están encarcelados. Aunque las voces de alrededor del país son diferentes, las historias y el dolor son los mismos. En esas llamadas, yo entiendo que estoy hablando con las "otras víctimas." Ellos son los que nunca reciben mención en los periódicos—los familiares quien han visto a sus seres amados yendo cuesta abajo, que han asistido innumerables audiencias judiciales, que han gastado sus ahorros de toda la vida en los honorarios de abogados o en programas de rehabilitación, y quienes están criando los hijos que los padres encarcelados han dejado atrás. Estos son los que tomaran otro trabajo para llegar al fin del mes en su vejez. Y aunque algunos pueden ser parcialmente culpables por el camino a la prisión de sus seres amados, ellos también sufren en este viaje.

El ser tanto un capellán y un

especialista en programas de apoyo me ofrece una perspectiva dual única que pocas personas llegan a tener. Yo veo el dolor de los prisioneros, pero también veo el dolor de sus seres amados. Ambos grupos se sienten solos, pero ambos grupos pueden beneficiar del confort que ofrece Dios. Como un capellán de una prisión yo les comunico a las personas tras las rejas que el piso al pie de la cruz es plano-en los ojos de Dios todos nos hemos equivocado, y todos necesitamos de su ayuda. Y como un especialista en el programa de apoyo, me encanta ser capaz de compartir el mismo mensaje de perdón con todas las personas que llaman semana tras semana, buscando esperanza, intentando encontrar un camino para atravesar la experiencia de tener un ser amado encarcelado.

Si se ha preguntado cómo puede ayudar a estas víctimas poco reconocidas, aquí tengo unas cuantas sugerencias:

Continúa en la pág. 2

## **Cartas al Editor**

En actualidad me encuentro cumpliendo una condena de 25 años y he estado encerrado desde 2009. Ha sido un camino difícil con el abandono de mi familia y también sin algún contacto con mis hijos. En todo este tiempo no he visto o sé de mi abuela desde 2007 y un día solo le escribí una carta pidiéndole ayuda. Yo no conocía el número de su casa- solo su calle y ciudad. Bueno yo oré y le envié esa carta, y ahora mi abuela me ha encontrado. ... Tanto ella como mi tía vendrán a verme pronto. Dios es increíble.

- J.S., Florida

Yo deseaba informarle de que me han ayudado de una manera muy especial. Estoy encerrado desde 2010. Yo tengo dos hijos que no he visto desde mi encarcelación. Su madre y yo estábamos separados desde antes que yo fuera a la prisión, pero esto en realidad cortó cualquier comunicación con ella. Yo les escribía a mis hijos cada mes con poca o nada de respuesta. Yo no sabía qué ocurriría en mi relación con mis hijos. Estar en prisión es bastante difícil, pero tener hijos y estar en prisión, bueno eso es suficiente para terminar

con cualquier hombre. Yo he inscrito a mis hijos en Angel Tree desde 2012. Pensé que al menos podría ser parte de su Navidad a través de Angel Tree. Sin embargo, esta esperanza comenzó a desvanecerse rápidamente a inicios de 2016. Sin ninguna visita o cartas de ellos yo comencé a cuestionar a Dios, sobre por qué Él permitiría que esto ocurriera. ... En el 11-2-16, escuche a Dios. Al regresar a mi dormitorio vi que me había llegado correo. Era una carta de la madre de mis hijos con dos fotos de ellos, y con una carta de cada uno de ellos. ... Ella también los va a traer a visitarme. Dios usó las personas cariñosas en Angel Tree para reconciliar a un padre con sus hijos.

- B.M.

Hace tiempo yo hubiera intentado vender drogas para mantener a mi familia... [Pero Dios] ha renovado mi pensamiento, confiando en Él por un regalo para Timothy. Mi nueva familia en Cristo le suministró un regalo. Él no solo recibió un regalo pero se le informó a su madre del amor de Cristo... Sus acciones benevolentes demuestran que las personas aún se preocupan en un mundo que yo dejé



hace tiempo. Estoy inspirado en mantenerme en contacto con mi familia y los amo con el infinito amor que Cristo enseño por la manera en que vivió su vida.

- R.R.

Recibimos muchas cartas de hombres y mujeres en prisión que quieren recibir Inside Journal en Español. Damos gracias a Dios por su interés, pero nuestro periódico solo está disponible por medio de capellanes o voluntarios que visitan su prisión. Capellanes y voluntarios pueden contactarnos por escribir a insidejournal@pfm.org o Inside Journal, PO Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146 para recibir Inside Journal (en inglés, español, o ambos) gratis.

**Víctimas Ocultas** *Viene de la pág. 1* 

- 1) Invite a Dios en su viaje y Pídale que le muestre lo que necesitas tener-no solo lo que dice el tribunal, pero por lo que verdaderamente debe responsabilizarse. Pare de culpar a los demás, y luego entregue su situación y usted mismo a Dios. La Biblia nos dice que si confesamos nuestros pecados, El es fiel en perdonarnos nuestros pecados (1 Juan 1:9). ¡Recuerde, no hay reformación sin transformación! (para aprender más, lea el artículo en la parte superior de la página 3).
- 2) Escríbale a su ser amado y comuníquele que lo siente—y que sea la verdad. Y pídale perdón por sus malas decisiones y acciones. Recuerde que no puede ser responsable por como reaccionen ellos, pero usted si puede ser responsable por lo que dice y hace.
- 3) Busque grupos de estudio
  Bíblico y programas de habilidades de vida dentro de
  su prisión para crecer más
  allá de su estado actual. Si
  espera hasta salir, nunca lo
  hará. Puede ser necesario
  que hable con el capellán
  o el gerente del programa
  para averiguar lo que tiene
  disponible para usted.

- 4) Ya sea que usted es cristiano o no, anímese en rodearse de personas que comparten valores positivos. Nosotros nos volvemos como las personas que nos rodean, y es importante asociarse con las personas que quieren vivir de manera diferente.
- **5) Y finalmente, es importante orar por sus seres amados.**Dios es capaz de hacer cosas mucho más grandes que las que imaginamos, y nuestras oraciones no serán ignoradas (Efesios 3:20-21).

En una reciente llamada de Hope's Gate, les comunique a las personas que llamaban que ellos tienen la libertad de compartir o no, comprendiendo que muchos están inseguros porque temen ser juzgados. En los últimos 15 minutos, tomamos solicitudes de oraciones. Desde los rincones ocultos de la conexión telefónica escuche una voz en lágrimas que no había sonado antes decir, ¿"Por favor podría orar por mi nieto? Lo amo mucho y me preocupo por él."

Otra víctima no vista, esta abuela no se ha dado por vencida con su nieto, separado de ella por rejas de prisión y malas decisiones. En esos momentos remanentes, ¡todos tomamos provecho de Dios que nos puede traer las respuestas y darle a todo un giro!

#### Salvación

Viene de la pág. 1

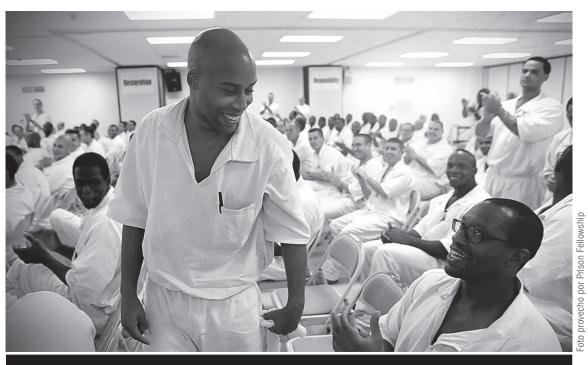
de hacer las cosas a la manera de Dios.

Él recuerda, "Tenía que decidir si deseaba continuar por el camino a la destrucción o el camino de la salvación."

Arthur escogió el camino de Dios. Su decisión difícil lo metió en problemas de inmediato con su antigua pandilla, pero se abría un nuevo futuro.

Arthur fue liberado del confinamiento solitario en el 2003. Él de inmediato busco al capellán de la prisión para poder aprender más acerca de su nueva fe. Él también comenzó a tomar cursos universitarios y estudiaba la Biblia de día y de noche. Nada podía sacudir

"Tenía que decidir si deseaba continuar por el camino a la destrucción o el camino de la salvación."



La unidad de re-inserción intensiva basada en la fe en el Carol Vance Unit en Texas le dio a Arthur un entorno positivo para enfrentar el pasado, y para prepararse para el futuro.

su determinación en pensar de manera positiva, ni aun cuando le negaron la libertad condicional por primera vez.

Arthur recuerda ahora, "Tenía que aprender que Dios no se preocupa por la felicidad, pero sí en que se realice Su propósito."

Cinco años después él de nuevo era elegible para la libertad condicional.

Al revisar su comportamiento ejemplar, un miembro de la Junta de Libertad Condicional comentó, "Usted era el peor reo al inicio, y desde 2003 usted tiene un registro impecable. ¿Qué ocurrió?"

Arthur respondió de la única manera que sabía: "Señora, ahora yo creo en Jesucristo como mi Señor y Salvador."

La Junta de Libertad Condicional recomendó que Arthur fuera trasladado a un programa intenso de reingreso de la Confraternidad Carcelaria. A los siete días él se encontraba en camino al Carol Vance Unit.

#### Afrontando el Pasado

Arthur logró lo máximo posible de lo que ofrecía el programa, aun cuando significaba enfrentar las realidades dolorosas que lo habían llevado a las calles en el primer lugar. Él recuerda, "Yo sentía como si hubiera sido abandonado y descartado como basura por mi madre." "Y mi padre... prefirió el alcohol más que a mí."

En el 2011, Arthur salió por el portón un hombre libre y completó la fase del programa de reingreso después de la libertad.

"Dios convirtió mi desorden en un milagro," Arthur dice con alegría.

Desde su libertad, Arthur ha trabajado en construir la vida que se perdió antes. Él es el vicepresidente de operaciones en una empresa de ventilación, y él capacita y administra un equipo de 15 a 20 personas. En el trabajo Arthur se asegura que su equipo está enterado que ellos le importan y lo que ocurre en sus vidas. Recientemente, él hasta ayudo en fortalecer el matrimonio de un colega.

Arthur se casó hace unos pocos años. Juntos, él y su esposa están ayudando a criar su sobrina. Ella tenía problemas en la escuela cuando llegó a su casa en Texas, pero ahora aparece en el cuadro de honor.

A veces Arthur aun piensa acerca del pasado—los primeros días atemorizantes en la calle, las cosas que hizo, y las horas interminables en el confinamiento solitario. Pero al final está agradecido.

"Si me arrepiento de cosas en el pasado, y desearía deshacerlas," él dice. "Pero ese era un niño extraviado que tenía muchos problemas que afrontar. Sentado en mí celda se suponía que sería el final del camino para mí. Pero Dios traspasó el abismo obscuro y arrojó un rayo de esperanza que me mantuvo."

Arthur también regresa a la prisión en proximidad a su hogar para ayudar liderar el estudio Bíblico. Él tiene un mensaje para ellos y todas las personas aún tras las rejas: "Vivan sus vidas a propósito. Hagan que todo cuente. Dios obrará para el bien sin importar las circunstancias o la situación en que se encuentre."

## Un Nuevo Nombre, Una Nueva Familia

**Por Zoe Erler** 

onocíamos su rostro mucho antes de que él viera el nuestro. Hace tres años vimos su foto por primera vez. Un

bebe de 18-meses sin algún padre o nombre conocido. Desde el otro lado del mundo le dimos un nombre. Nos convertimos en sus padres. Él se convirtió en nuestro hijo.

Y tres años más tarde, cuando él tenía cuatro años y medio, lo tuvimos en nuestros brazos por primera vez. El pequeño niño que habíamos conocido todo este tiempo finalmente comenzó a conocernos a nosotros—su "Mamá" y "Papá."

Es una historia de adopción. Es una historia de alguien perdido que fue encontrado. Es una historia acerca de Dios.

#### Una Larga Búsqueda

Como puede ver, desde el día en que mi esposo y yo iniciamos el largo viaje para convertir un pequeño niño del otro lado del mundo en nuestro hijo, yo comencé a comprender que la adopción me involucraba tanto a mí así como a mi hijo. Habíamos buscado a nuestro hijo a lo largo de horas de arduo papeleo, docenas de tarifas de cuidado al hogar de acogida e innumerables oraciones. De manera similar, Dios, mi Padre Celestial me había estado buscando de antes que se formara el mundo, y mucho antes de que yo existiera.

En los Salmos, David describe cómo Dios lo conocía mucho antes de ser concebido: "Me observabas cuando estaba siendo formado en total aislamiento, al ser tejido en la oscuridad del vientre. Me viste antes de que yo naciera. Cada día de mi vida fue



registrado en su libro. Cada momento estaba establecido antes de que hubiera pasado un solo día. (Salmo 139: 15-16, NLT).

A medida que pasaron los días y semanas, y los retrasos legales y burocráticos hacían que se alargara la adopción de nuestro hijo, nos enfrentamos con la realidad que esta adopción terminaría costándonos más de lo que habíamos anticipado. Cada mes que no lo podíamos traer a casa era un mes más de pagos a la familia del hogar de acogida de nuestro hijo-dinero que deseábamos que pudiéramos estar ahorrando hacia su universidad. Aun así, nuestro hijo lo merecía y estábamos dispuestos a pagar lo que fuera para que él tuviera un buen cuidado en nuestra ausencia.

Similarmente, cuando Dios decidió hacerme su hija, Él lo hizo con el costo máximo a sí mismo; Él me adoptó a costa de la vida de su Hijo. La Biblia dice que todos somos huérfanos, perdidos y solos sin un Padre Celestial, y Dios sacrificó a su propio Hijo Jesús voluntariamente—Su hijo amado—para convertir a los huérfanos como usted y yo en Sus queridos hijos e hijas.

En Romanos 8:32, el Apóstol Pablo describe el lujo del amor de Dios hacia nosotros: "Siendo que él ni escatimo su propio Hijo, pero lo entregó para todos nosotros, ¿No nos dará todo lo demás?"

Dios estaba dispuesto en pagar por nuestras vidas al costo de su posesión más preciada— Su Hijo. El costo que mi esposo y yo hemos incurrido para adoptar a nuestro hijo ni comienza a compararse.

#### Ajustando a una Nueva Realidad

Ahora que nuestro hijo se encuentra en casa en condiciones seguras, estamos ajustando a la vida como una nueva familia. Nuestro hijo en particular está ajustando a la vida en un nuevo continente, cultura y clima. Algunos días, él está feliz y contento. Otros días está confundido, enojado y triste. Algunos días él me abraza y susurra en mi oído que me ama. Otros días él se me aleja, ignora lo que digo, y me desobedece abiertamente. Y a pesar de mis muchas fallas como padre, hago lo mejor posible para amarlo con firmeza y cariño sin importar cómo me trata.

Con frecuencia en nuestra relación con Dios, también somos volubles. Algunos días caminamos a Su lado con alabanzas en nuestros labios. Otros días preferimos no tener nada con Él. Es similar a lo que siente mi propio hijo al ingresar a la familia de Dios, a veces se siente feliz, a veces con temor, y a veces confundido. Con frecuencia Él nos pide hacer cosas que parecen extrañas, y difíciles. En vez de obedecerle nos alejamos y hacemos lo nuestro. Y en nuestros peores días, incluso nos alejamos de Él a máxima velocidad

o luchamos en Su contra, muy

lucha y empuja en mí contra.

parecido como mi hijo a menudo

Afortunadamente el amor del Padre no depende de nuestro afecto u actitud hacia Él.

El hecho es que Pablo dice que "Dios mostró su gran amor por nosotros al enviar a Cristo a morir por nosotros, mientras que aun éramos pecadores" (Romanos 5:8, NLT)

Una y otra vez, la Biblia habla acerca de cuánto ama Dios a los huérfanos. Él esta descrito como un "padre a los huérfanos de padre." El cuida de los huérfanos literales, esos como mí hijo sin padres biológicos conocidos. Pero Él también cuida de los huérfanos espirituales. Aquellos como tú y yo quienes a través del pecado, han renunciado a nuestra relación con nuestro Padre Celestial. Nosotros somos los "huérfanos de padre" que necesitan ser adoptados.

Yo estoy tan agradecida que Dios escogió adoptarme y en darme un Nuevo nombre—Su nombre—y una nueva familia, la familia de Dios. ¿Y qué tal usted? ¿También necesita ser adoptado? ■

#### **Comenzando a Pertenecer**

Todos necesitamos un sentido de pertenencia. Dios nos ofrece un lugar en Su familia—como sus hijos adoptados que son completamente amados y aceptados. Si esa es una relación que usted desea continuar, puede iniciar con palabras de su corazón.

Querido Dios, me siento perdido y solo, como un niño sin hogar. Deseo ser parte de Tu familia. Gracias por el sacrificio de Jesús en pagar el viaje para que yo sea adoptado como Tu hijo.

Si usted desea iniciar una nueva vida como parte de la familia de Dios, Inside Journal quiere ayudar. A través de una de nuestras organizaciones asociadas usted puede recibir un estudio bíblico gratuito por correspondencia, y una Biblia NIV, y si no tiene acceso a una. Escriba a "Beginning to Belong," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. Los materiales están disponibles en inglés y español.

## Papa Francisco Denuncia la Violencia

CIUDAD JUÁREZ—Durante el último día de su viaje a México en febrero, Papa Francisco visitó a reos en el Cereso Número 3 de Ciudad Juárez en Chihuahua. Después de un recorrido por las instalaciones, bendijo la capilla y saludó a 20 mujeres y 30 hombres escogidos por su buen compartamiento, que le entregaron obsequios.

Antes de irse, ofició una misa ante unos 700 reos. El Vaticano después lanzó una transcripción de su declaración:

"... Hoy, junto a ustedes y con ustedes, quiero reafirmar una vez más la confianza a la que Jesús nos impulsa: la misericordia que abraza a todos y en todos los rincones de la tierra. No hay espacio donde su misericordia no pueda llegar, no hay espacio

ni persona a la que no pueda tocar.

"Celebrar el Jubileo de la misericordia con ustedes es recordar el camino urgente que debemos tomar para



romper los círculos de la violencia y de la delincuencia. Ya tenemos varias décadas perdidas pensando y creyendo que todo se resuelve aislando. apartando, encarcelando, sacándonos los problemas de encima, creyendo que esas medidas solucionan verdaderamente los problemas. Nos hemos olvidado de concentrarnos en lo que realmente debe ser nuestra verdadera preocupación: la vida de las personas; sus vidas, las de sus familias, la de aquellos que también han sufrido a causa de este círculo de violencia.

"La misericordia divina nos recuerda que las cárceles son un síntoma de cómo estamos en sociedad, son un síntoma en muchos casos de silencios y de omisiones que han

provocado una cultura del descarte. Son un síntoma de una cultura que ha dejado de apostar por la vida; de una sociedad que poco a poco ha ido abandonando a sus hijos.

"La misericordia nos recuerda que la reinserción no comienza acá en estas paredes; sino que comienza antes, comienza «afuera», en las calles de la ciudad. La reinserción o rehabilitación, comienza creando un sistema que podríamos llamarlo de salud social, es decir, una sociedad que busque no enfermar contaminando las relaciones en el barrio, en las escuelas, en las plazas, en las calles, en los hogares, en todo el espectro social. Un sistema de salud social que procure generar una cultura que actúe y busque prevenir aquellas

situaciones, aquellos caminos que terminan lastimando y deteriorando el tejido social.

"A veces pareciera que las cárceles se proponen incapacitar a las personas a seguir cometiendo delitos más que promover los procesos de reinserción que permitan atender los problemas sociales, psicológicos y familiares que llevaron a una persona a determinada actitud. El problema de la seguridad no se agota solamente encarcelando, sino que es un llamado a intervenir afrontando las causas estructurales y culturales de la inseguridad, que afectan a todo el entramado social. ..."

En años recientes, muchas personas se han muertos en la cárcel, de mala fama por violencia y desorden. ■

#### Detrás de la Etiqueta de Angel Tree

#### Por A.R. Quinn



nivel nacional, uno de cada 28 niños tiene un padre tras las rejas, resultando en muchas

familias separadas. Desde 1982 Angel Tree®, un programa de Prison Fellowship que fue iniciado por un antiguo ladrón de bancos, le ha dado a los padres una oportunidad en restaurar y fortalecer relaciones con sus hijos.

En el 2015, más de 300,000 niños fueron emparejados con Iglesias locales y organizaciones que les dieron a los niños regalos navideños a nombre de los padres tras las rejas. Cada regalo entregado a un niño representa un proceso complicado-iniciando con los padres encarcelados.

En cada paso del proceso, Charles Rock, el director nacional de los programas Angel Tree, se asegura que la operación funciona lo mejor posible. Hace poco Inside Journal alcanzó a Charles para darles a nuestros lectores la primicia sobre el cómo-y por qué-él hace este trabajo inusual.

#### IJ: Su trabajo tiene muchas partes móviles. ¿Cómo lo resum-

Charles: Yo superviso todas las operaciones y el desarrollo del programa para Angel Tree.

El ser exitoso en mi trabajo es tener a todos los niños Angel Tree elegibles asignados a una iglesia local o a una organización.

#### IJ: ¿Qué lo preparó para este trabajo?

Charles: Anteriormente yo estaba con AOL cerca de 10 años. ... Alrededor del año 2009 comencé a sentir una necesidad en hacer algo que importara. El éxito en AOL se media con el dinero generado, la publicidad, visitas a la página, esa clase de cosa. Eso está bien, pero yo deseaba hacer otra cosa.

El único trabajo que surgió que me interesaba era el de director nacional de Angel Tree. El cazatalentos pensaba que yo había enloquecido; el dinero era mucho menos. Pero nunca quise nada más. Yo realmente tuve que confiar y apoyarme en Dios.

IJ: ¿Cómo se enteró acerca de **Angel Tree?** 

Charles: Yo ya estaba familiarizado con Chuck Colson, el fundador del Prison Fellowship (la Confraternidad Carcelaria). Yo había leído algunos de sus libros. Tan pronto que descubrí acerca del puesto, me sumergí en aprender de lo que trataba Angel Tree: restaurando y fortaleciendo las familias de prisioneros. También me convertí en el coordinador del programa Angel Tree en mi iglesia. Llevo 5 años haciendo eso. Eso me ha dado una muy buena perspectiva al ver el programa desde abajo y todos los retos asociados a el—así como las bendiciones.

IJ: Solo es la primavera, pero la fecha límite para las solicitudes Angel Tree llegará pronto. ¿Por qué tan temprano?

> Charles: La fecha límite es temprana porque cuando se reciben 200,000 solicitudes con grandes cantidades de información es muy

complejo. Todas las solicitudes van a un socio que las ingresa en nuestro sistema. Luego tenemos que validar la información, investigar lo

que falta, que se necesita, para poder emparejar a los niños con una iglesia.

En realidad las iglesias desean tener las listas más temprano. En actualidad hemos colocado la fecha límite tan tarde cómo sea posible para los prisioneros, y aún

tener una buena oportunidad de asignar los niños a las iglesias.

IJ: Hace un momento usted mencionó los retos. Yo entiendo que a veces, aun cuando un padre presenta la solicitud a tiempo es posible que un niño no reciba un regalo. ¿Por qué?

Charles: hay varias razones por las cuales es posible que un niño no reciba un regalo. Puede ser que la solicitud no está completa, o nos faltó información que era necesaria para hacer la entrega. A veces la iglesia no puede localizar la familia porque ellos se han mudado, O la familia no desea participar por alguna razón. Ocasionalmente no hay voluntarios que viven suficientemente cerca para servirle a un niño, pero el año pasado, más del 99 por ciento de todos los niños Angel Tree elegibles fueron asignados a una iglesia u organización.

#### IJ: Por qué solo son elegibles los niños e hijastros—¿no los nietos?

Charles: Para poder servirles a padres y padrastros-y sus hijosde manera efectiva, necesitamos enfocarnos en nuestra misión central. No tenemos los recursos para expandirlo más allá de eso.

IJ: ¿Tiene usted hijos y alguna vez imaginó que ocurriría si fuera encarcelado?

Charles: Yo tengo cuatro: dos hijos y dos hijas. Mis hijos tienen 16, 13, 11, y 8 años de edad.

Hubo un momento en mi vida anterior que yo esperaba ser capturado, y nunca ocurrió, y yo ciertamente veo mucho de mí en esto. Es muy fácil tomar decisiones equivocadas y que ocurran estas cosas. Esto no significa que usted no ama a sus hijos y que ellos no lo aman a usted. Usted debería ser capaz de mantener una conexión.

#### IJ: Angel Tree es mucho trabajo-para los voluntarios y para usted. Permítame hacerle una pregunta, ¿que saca usted de esto?

Charles: Lo que sacamos de esto es poder hacerlo, lo que es una bendición más allá de descripción. Puede que eso sea difícil de entender, pero es verdad. También me siento bendecido por ser un padre, y yo logro conectar a los padres que aman a sus hijos, y a hijos que aman a sus padres. Yo soy un sendero. Eso significa mucho para mí, y yo sé que eso significa mucho a todas las personas involucradas con Angel Tree. Yo tengo un llamado particular para hacerlo por ser un padre, y porque yo comprendo. Hay un par de personas en mi familia que han sido encarcelados, y ellos también tienen familias.

## ¡Conéctese con su Niño(a) Estas Navidades!

#### ¿Qué es Angel Tree?

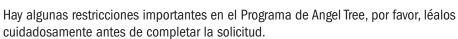
Tal vez usted ha oído de Angel Tree que tiene un programa Prison Fellowship; pero usted no está informado de cómo funciona. Angel Tree es una forma simple de hacerle sabe a sus niños(as) que usted está pensando en ellos en las Navidades.

Angel Tree funciona así: las solicitudes se les envían a los capellanes de las prisiones participantes temprano en Junio. Usted llena la solicitud pidiendo a Angel Tree que le dé un regalo a su niño(s) de parte de usted en las Navidades. Usted puede sugerir la clase de regalo que usted piensa le gustaría a su niño(a). Su capellán recoge las solicitudes y las envía al Angel Tree para la fecha fijada. En el otoño, los voluntarios de Angel Tree llaman a la persona que cuida a su niño(a) para verificar cual es el regalo que a su niño(a) le gustaría recibir. Antes de las Navidades, los voluntarios de Angel Tree comprarán y envolverán el regalo. El regalo será entregado en el hogar de su niño(a) o le será entregado a su niño(a) una fiesta de Navidad y una presentación del Evangelio auspiciados por Angel Tree. Se le dirá a su niño(a) que ese regalo viene de usted-¡su mamá o papá que lo ama! Además, la etiqueta del regalo tendrá un breve mensaje personal escrito por usted para su niño(a).



#### Un Regalo de su Corazón Hasta el de Ellos ...

Este verano es el tiempo de que usted registre a sus niños para que reciban un regalo de Navidades de usted a través de Angel Tree. Las solicitudes para las Navidades del 2016 deben estar estampadas del correo para Septiembre 6, 2016. Pídale una solicitud a su capellán o al coordinador de programas, y el capellán o coordinador de programas deben enviarla cuando usted la halla completado.





- 1) Usted **debe ser** el padre, la madre, el padrastro o la madrastra.
- 2) No debe haber una orden de restricción que le prohíba el contacto con el niño(a), niños(as) o con su(s) cuidadores.
- Sus niños deben vivir en los Estados Unidos.
- 4) Sus niños deben tener 18 años o menos de 18 años de edad.
- 5) La solicitud deberá estar llena completamente con letra legible.
- 6) La solicitud deberá estar **firmada**.
- 7) La solicitud deberá estar estampada del correo para Septiembre 6, 2016.

Comience a preparar como registrar a sus niños(as) ahora; contacte su cuidador para reunir la información más reciente para ponerle en la solicitud.

¡Obtenga una solicitud y registre a sus niños(as) hoy! Un regalo especial de usted en las Navidades le ayudará a saber que usted los ama, y los conectará con una iglesia que pueda estar al lado de su familia durante su ausencia. Y lo mejor de todo, les dará a ellos una oportunidad de tener la experiencia del amor transformador de Jesucristo.

Angel Tree hace el mayor esfuerzo para servir a cada niño que es elegible. A veces, sin embargo, si nosotros no podemos localizar al cuidador de sus niños(as), si el cuidador rehúsa participar, o si no hay suficientes Angel Tree voluntarios en el área local, puede que no seamos capaces de entregarle los regalos a sus niños(as).

Si su institución no está registrada y no ha recibido las solicitudes, su capellán puede llamar a 1-800-55-ANGEL para obtener más información y saber cómo participar.



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PRISON FELLOWSHIP



## INSIDE JOURNAL®

YOUR SOURCE OF INSPIRATION AND INFORMATION

VOLUME 25. NO. 3

**SUMMER 2016** 

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## Billy Kidd Takes His Last Shot

by A.R. Quinn

illiam "Billy"
Kidd used to
live up to his
outlaw name.
According to
his then-parole officer, Mark
Goricki, he showed up at a
parole appointment in the
early 1990s in a black Grand
Prix, wearing a black cowboy
hat and a black duster down
to his ankles. He liked playing
the part.

Growing up in Michigan, Billy was an altar boy from a well-to-do suburban family. However, he doesn't remember learning much from the Latin masses at the Roman Catholic church, and there was trouble at home. His father, a successful executive, traveled a lot. His mother, struggling with depression, self-medicated with alcohol.

Embarrassed by the situation at home, Billy, who was often teased about sharing a name with a legendary Wild West gunfighter, started getting into



Billy Kidd once lived up to his outlaw name.

When he ended up in segregation behind bars,
he realized he needed one last shot at life—and he found one.

all the trouble he could find. He bounced in and out of juvenile detention and youth camp. The troubled boy unraveled even more after his mom died of a massive heart attack.

At 17, Billy caught his first adult felony charges. He wound up on a cell block with men he calls "the worst of the worst." He remembers, "They became my mentors in crime."

Prison became a place of belonging. "Everyone I knew was [behind bars]," he says. "I would come out to the free world to wreak havoc, run deals, and get sent back."

Once or twice in the early days of his incarceration, Billy heard people talk about Jesus, but any "jailhouse religion" crumbled as soon as he was out. The streets, promising money and women, were too powerful a temptation.

#### From Dead-End to Deliverance

After years spent revolving in and out of the Michigan Department of Corrections, Billy had a body's worth of

tattoos and a rap sheet long enough to wallpaper a room. He also had a daughter that he had never met.

In November 1998, he found himself in segregation for his leadership role in a race-based prison gang. There, he says, God got his attention.

With a Bible for a companion, Billy began to read. The words made sense to him in a way they never had before. He started to reflect on the way he was living and the collateral damage of all his bad choices.

"I recognized the evil in my life," he says. "I thought, If I died right now, people would be happy."

would be happy."

Billy felt like God was giving him one more chance to get his life right. He begged for forgiveness and decided to make the most of his last shot.

When Billy got out of segregation, he stayed true to his commitment. With good behavior, he got down from Level V to Level II. He got involved in the prison church,

Continued on page 2

## Cancer Unites Women in Texas Prison

by Zoe Erler

hen Lorie
Longoria was
diagnosed
with stage-II
breast cancer
while serving time in the
Texas prison system, her first
thought was, "Am I still being
punished?" An even harder
thought quickly followed: "I
don't want to die in prison."

She faced a double mastectomy, then chemo, then losing all of her hair, and then reconstructive surgery.

"During my struggles, I was very alone," she admits. "I had a terrible time getting my hair cut when it was falling out. I had so many questions that I didn't know if I was asking the right questions."

Though she felt all alone during her ordeal, Longoria, who was incarcerated at the Carole Young Medical Facility, was actually surrounded by other women who were also dealing with difficult diagno-

ses, including cancer. One day, she had an epiphany.

Why not start a support group so others don't have to

walk this journey alone? she wondered.

She approached Bill Loyd, field director for Prison Fel-

lowship in southeast Texas, to see if he might be able to help her start such a group. Not long afterward, the Texas De-

p partment of Criminal Justice p granted permission.

#### Together in the Hard Times

On January 16, 2015, the Sisters of Love, Life, and Strength (SOLLS) had their first meeting.

In a place like prison, where self-preservation, privacy, and outward strength are prized, this group is making a statement: that doing it alone isn't better than doing it together. And that vulnerability and community can make prison time not only more bearable, but actually something beautiful.

Tapped by Loyd to lead the group, former banker and breast cancer survivor Nadine Eidman had never dreamed of visiting a prison, much less volunteering in one. But when Loyd asked if she would be willing to help, her own experience with the disease pushed her to say "yes."

"When you hear the word 'cancer,' it's heavy. I had the

Continued on page 2



Nobody wants to hear the word "cancer." For women behind bars in Texas, the struggle with cancer became an opportunity to lean on each other and find a beautiful hope.

#### YOUR OWN BEST ADVOCATE

#### Guest Column: Dan Kingery

When you are in the system, it can seem hopeless. You have few choices, little input, and a lot of people telling you what to do. It's tempting to shut off your brain and just do time.

However, we are each created with unique gifts. It's unhealthy—and against our design—to numb out and let time slip by. It might seem easiest in the short run, but forcing yourself to "do time" wastes the gift of each day, promotes hopelessness, and sets you up for failure upon release.

The truth is, even when you are behind bars, you do still have some control. Your mindset is the single greatest factor in whether you do time, or whether you manage to use time.

Step One in using your time well is to resist thinking of yourself as the victim of a situation someone else imposed on you. You have the choice to be the best person you can be today and work toward the person you want to be tomorrow. Decide what action you will take to do more than just get by psychologically and physically. Think about what good you can do,

for yourself and others, with the talent and opportunities you do have.

Step Two is to realize that everyone lives in a community. Sometimes we talk as though "the community" only existed outside prison. The fact is, you live in a community right now, and you can be a powerful voice for wellness, safety and growth. From Angola to Zephyrhills, every resident of every prison has an opportunity to be a good citizen today.

Your actions and attitudes shape your in-prison community. When you establish strong, prosocial relationships, it benefits you and your neighbors. When you help solve problems, give respect, and encourage healthy living, you are part of the solution. Whether you signed up to be one or not, you are a role model for the people

around you.

Ninety-five percent of prisoners will be released, and many have a great vision for what they are going to do in the free world. But practicing good citizenship in the prison community now greatly improves your chances of being a good citizen when you get there. Don't deceive yourself: there's nothing magical about passing through the gate. The person you are in prison is the person you'll be on the street.

So start right now. You might not have many freedoms, but you still have what's most important: control over your attitude and aspirations, influence, and a choice about how you will use your time today. Use what you have for good.

Dan Kingery is the vice president of ministry programs at Prison Fellowship.

#### Subscription Info

At Inside Journal (IJ), we receive many letters each week from prisoners asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers—however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is only available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

#### Cancer Unites Women Continued from page 1

benefit of my family, people who would come with me to listen to what the doctors were saying. These women don't have anybody. It's them and the doctors and this disease. It's a major challenge."

Women of all ages and stages of cancer began showing up on Fridays to receive encouragement for their fight, as well as to offer encouragement to others.

At any given group meeting, there are between eight and 25 attendees. About 50 percent have cancer, and the rest have other diagnoses. They ask questions and share answers.

"Some don't really understand the diagnosis," Eidman explains. "They don't know what to ask and don't know what they've been told. You're in shock."

Together, they help each other understand what's happening in their bodies during treatment and discuss ways to live healthier even while battling the disease. They pray for each other, read Scripture and other inspirational materials together, and sometimes even tell jokes. And they help each other learn to trust God in the ups and downs.

"We celebrate when people are doing well and come together when people aren't doing well. And we recognize that all of our days are numbered. It's an opportunity to

re-focus," Eidman says.

One of the hardest moments over the past year and a half was when a key member of the group passed away.

"She was a beacon and a very happy, encouraging resource to the other women," Eidman says.

"And it's hard. It's really hard," she adds.

#### Something Beautiful

But perhaps more than anything, the group has become a family.

Marcela Roman says that she didn't want to attend when a friend first invited her. "I don't want to cry," she explained to her friend.

Despite her diagnosis of thyroid cancer, Roman's family wouldn't respond to her letters, and she felt isolated and alone.

Her friend told her she wouldn't have to say anything—just come and listen.

"So we went and I paid attention. I was listening to everybody that was carrying this pain as I'm carrying it too, but they are strong and they encourage each other."

So she kept coming and now won't miss a Friday.

"They support you as a true family," Roman says.

According to Longoria, that has always been the goal: "I want people to know that even though we are away from our families during this difficult time, God has provided a beautiful family for the incarcerated women in the community of SOLLS."

#### **Last Shot** Continued from page 1

joined Bible studies, and started counseling other men.

The first time he came up for parole after giving his life to God, he was turned down flat. "The [parole board] just saw who I had been," Billy remembers. "Stabbings. Extortion. Robbery." He thanked the parole board for its time and mentally prepared himself to max out. He was even happy about it; prison was still his home, but now he was learning to turn prison culture upside down by following God and leading others in that journey.

But God had other plans for the reformed outlaw.

Not long after Billy was denied parole, a counselor

called Billy to his office and told him to close the door. Billy hesitated; he didn't want to be labeled a snitch. But the counselor insisted, and when Billy sat down, the counselor slid papers across the desk to him. It was a P-61 form, designating Billy for immediate release.

Two weeks later, Billy was on the street.

#### Another Chance at Life

"It was scary. I didn't know what to do," he recalls.

But Billy found a mentor who reminded him of the truth of the Gospel and helped him overcome challenges, like getting his driver's license and filing his taxes for the first time. He found work with a buddy who did roof-



Billy's release from prison meant facing the unknown, but he had a mentor to guide him. With a new attitude, new family, and new purpose, Billy is living a transformed life.

"EVERYONE I KNEW WAS
[BEHIND BARS]. I WOULD
COME OUT TO THE
FREE WORLD TO WREAK
HAVOC, RUNDEALS, AND
GET SENT BACK."

ing. He saved money, found a place to live, and saw his old parole officer, Mark Goricki.

"He came out with a whole new attitude," Mark remembers. "I didn't believe it at first, but it turned out to be the real thing. He met curfew, got involved in no relationships, and said, 'I'm concentrating on me this time."

These days, Mark and Billy consider each other friends. They visit criminal justice

classes and jails to give their perspective on the criminal justice system, sharing how even men like Billy, whom Mark calls "the worst guy on my caseload in 39 years," can start over.

Released at age 42, Billy has made the most of his second chance. He is married and a family man. He gained custody of his daughter and raised her for several years. He enjoys his steady job.

In addition to the presentations he gives with Mark, he is also a volunteer who works with Prison Fellowship's area director in Michigan, Denise Harris.

Billy Kidd's name is still an ice-breaker, says Denise. But now, instead of being part of his criminal persona, his name is a powerful reminder of just how far God can take a person who believes in Him. "When I think of Billy," she says, "I think of transformation."

## Don't Do Your Time Alone

#### by Emily Andrews

n April 2016, Sgt.
Joseph Serna faced
a night behind bars.
But the retired Special
Forces Green Beret was
not a stranger to dark places.

Over the course of three tours in Afghanistan, Serna survived several traumatic experiences that could have easily claimed his life. He withstood the dangers of a roadside bomb and a suicide bomber. He survived another close call in an overturned truck, which landed upside down in a canal.

Only Sgt. Serna would make it out of the vehicle alive.

While these incidents earned Serna military decorations, they also left him with his fair share of emotional baggage. Like many of his fellow soldiers, he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, and a sense of isolation and loneliness.

To cope with the pain, he turned to alcohol. His situation reached a critical point in Fayetteville, North Carolina, when he was arrested and charged for driving under the influence.

Part of Serna's sentence required that he report to Judge Lou Olivera at the Veterans Treatment Court every two weeks. One time, Serna lied about a recent urine test. He later admitted this, and the judge sentenced Serna to one night behind bars.

#### Dark Night

After his wartime experiences, Serna already feared being in tight spaces. A night alone in prison sounded like more than the veteran could bear. Olivera could tell that Serna was anxious. He later remembered, "When Joe first came to turn himself in, he was trembling."

Joe Serna knew it would be a long night.

Many of us have experienced a "dark night of the soul." That is the kind of night that Serna faced in that North Carolina jail. He had no way out of the cell. He was tired of dealing with PTSD. It was one more nightmare he just wished he could wake up from. The worst part is that he was facing it all alone.

The Bible tells of Jesus' own experience with loneliness.
Jesus, who lived a faultless life,

entered into our darkness in order to bring His light. He showed God's love, healed the sick, and taught those who would listen. Eventually, Jesus would be accused by people who refused to believe in His message. He then faced the darkest time in His life: abandonment, isolation, torture, and ultimately, death on a cross. Knowing what was to come, Jesus spent time alone in a garden and prayed. He was honest about the pain and anxiety. Still, He asked that God's will would be done, even in a night as dark as this one.

#### Never Alone

As Serna sat alone in his cell, the silence was broken moments later by an unexpected visitor: Judge Lou Olivera. To Serna's surprise, the judge entered the cell. The door closed behind him. "I got chills when he walked in," the retired sergeant told The Fayetteville Observer.

Serna did not move. Olivera took a seat beside him. It was the only bunk in the cell, and naturally, Serna was confused. He remembered what Olivera had said earlier as they drove to the prison together: "We're

#### ARE YOU LONELY?

No matter whether you've been in Ad-Seg for months, or you are packed like a sardine into a noisy dorm with tiers of bunkbeds, prison can be a place of extreme isolation.

The Bible makes it clear that we were never made to be alone. We were made for peaceful, loving relationships with God and other people from the very beginning. We have all messed that up. Even so, God could not bear to let us remain separated from Him. He sent Jesus—also called Immanuel, or "God with us"—to die on a cross and pay the price for our sins. Because of this, we can begin a relationship with God and find new life in Him. If you want to do that today, you can start with this simple prayer.

God, I have been separated from You, but I don't want to be alone anymore. Thank you for showing me that You want to have a relationship with me. Please help me to turn from my past and to give my brokenness and shame to You. I want to have a fresh start and begin to walk in Your light.

God has gone to incredible lengths to restore your relationship with Him. You don't have to be alone anymore. If you'd like to learn more about what it means to have a relationship with God through Jesus, Inside Journal wants to help. Just write to "Are You Lonely?", P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790.

going to turn ourselves in."

Surely the judge could not have been serious. "You are here with me for the night?" Serna asked incredulously.

The judge replied, "Yeah, that's what I'm doing."

From then on, Serna was not the only man in the cell. He was not the only veteran, either. Olivera had served in the Gulf War and endured his fair share of war's horrors. He feared that a night alone would trigger Serna's PTSD. The battlefield is difficult for any soldier to leave behind completely.

Between bites of meatloaf, he and Serna shared their stories. They found common ground in their experiences as U.S. soldiers. Olivera even gave Serna the single bunk in the cell; the judge slept on a mattress on the floor. Literally overnight, their relationship transformed

into something Serna had never imagined. All it took was having someone there—someone who saw him, not for what he did, but for who he was.

"It was more of a fatherson conversation ... It was personal," Serna told The Washington Times. With one act of humility and compassion, a dark and lonely cell became much brighter.

Jesus Christ showed even greater humility and compassion when He gave up his life. That sacrifice has paid the debt we owe for our mistakes—a debt we could never satisfy. Now, those who accept Christ's gift of grace can join a new community: fellowship with God. All are invited to have a relationship with God, to be called His sons and daughters, and to experience new life with Him always at our side. Nobody has to do time alone.



A night alone in a cramped jail cell was the worst prescription for Sgt. Joe Serna's PTSD.

An unexpected visitor transformed the night in a way he wasn't prepared for.

## Time for a Change

from *Our Daily Bread* 



Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. 2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT

've discovered that God is in the rehabilitation business—bringing about personal change in people's lives. Christian rehabilitation is unique, for it relies on Christ's power to change people from the inside out.

All of us, without exception, have fallen short of God's standards. We are all addicted to sin and self. Every person needs to be rescued from sin's grip and become a new person in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We enter the Lord's unique life-changing program the day we receive Christ, and that program continues for life—not just for a few months. The apostle Paul put it this way: "And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns" (Philippians 1:6).

Whatever our sin-habits are, we all need the same Savior. And everyone who comes to Him echoes the same testimony: "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me." Are you letting Jesus Christ change you from the inside out?

-Joanie Yoder

Check with your chaplain about receiving the Our Daily Bread devotional on a regular basis.

> ourdailybread.org/ CorrectionalMinistries





## Running Toward Second Chances

by Emily Andrews

Leaving prison, Rob hoped for a better life beyond the gates. He had taken life-skills classes and studied dozens of books. But he also had rent and restitution to pay, as well as a family to support, and his record as an arsonist made it difficult to move forward. Though he was very qualified and performed well in job interviews, hiring managers turned him down cold as soon as his background check came back with a felony conviction. Discouraged, Rob felt like he was stuck in a "second prison," unable to unlock the door to a completely fresh start.

The Second Prison Project, a campaign of Prison Fellowship, supports opportunities for second chances and real restoration. The campaign seeks to change perceptions about people with a criminal record by showing their God-given potential to lead transformed lives, filled with purpose and positive contributions.

The first step in helping the 65 million Americans with a criminal record to participate more fully in public life is to raise awareness and engage the community. To that end, The Second Prison Project organized two community runs, called Second Chances 5Ks, in May 2016. The events took place at Concordia University in St. Paul, Minnesota, and America the Beautiful Park in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Jesse Wiese, Prison Fellowship's director of community engagement and the visionary behind The Second Prison Project, told the Colorado Springs Gazette, "One of the things we're trying to do is galvanize that momentum, that belief in second chances." They would need that momentum to effect real change in their communities.

#### The Starting Line

If the effort to create more opportunities for returning citizens is like a race, awareness is the first step across the starting line. The Second Chances 5Ks were an important part of helping people in Minnesota and Colorado understand the "second prison." Hundreds of participants walked, jogged, and ran to support the campaign.

Various prisons also organized

runs to take place within their walls, coinciding with the hosting cities' runs. Whether behind bars or in the free world, the runners were headed toward one finish line: a society that supports second chances and restored futures for people who have paid their debt.

That kind of cultural change doesn't happen overnight.

"We can have all the sentencing reform we want and have all the prison reform we want, but we still have to reform our culture," Wiese told the Gazette. He knows from experience how difficult it is to regain the community's trust. After spending nearly eight years in prison, Wiese had come to know God and decided to turn his life around. He finished a bachelor's degree from his cell, earned his law degree after release, and passed the Virginia Bar Exam. But his dream of becoming a

judge was cut short. He was denied a license to practice law because of his record.

As a felon, Wiese knew he would have to deal with stigmas. He just didn't know it would be so hard to overcome them.

#### A Strong Finish

Like Wiese, Dennis Avila, who was one of the runners in Colorado, had found God while in prison and resolved to turn his life around. But even with a change of heart, he struggled to reintegrate into society and build a stable life. He worked difficult jobs, he wasn't paid much, and he had no retirement plan.

Eventually, Avila started his own business, but the road to his second chance was a long one. "I was the guy who needed a project like this," he said on ColoradoSprings.com.

For other people with a criminal record, events like

the Second Chances 5Ks could instill a new hope. Avila and others were running together from miles apart, displaying what the campaign is all about: creating opportunities to build and sustain positive community that open doors of opportunity.

That kind of positive community can be formed even before people are released, and running for second chances gave women at MCF-Shakopee a chance to experience it firsthand.

"It was so cool to know that we were not alone," said one participant, referring to the hundreds of others who ran at different locations. Another participant shared that feeling: "I've never felt such unity within the prison walls—all of us cheering for each other."

One participant described the sense of wholeness that community brings. In a place like prison, where you can be surrounded by people and still feel alone, joining that community of runners was a powerful thing. "For a brief hour I forgot I was in prison and felt fully human again," she said.

Real community is possible, and it is transformative. The Second Chances 5Ks remind us that there are people behind bars, and outside them, who believe in a future of authentic, healthy, restored community. Some people just need another try. Given a second chance, they might just take it and run with it.



Runners who participated in the 5K in the Twin Cities held up two fingers before the start of the race to show their support for second chances.

## Going Against the Grain

#### by Sam Dye

In the United States, there are about 1,800 state and federal correctional facilities, plus an additional 3,200 local and county jails. If you go into any one of them, the unwritten code that governs life behind bars is more or less the same: Don't snitch. Mind your own business. Don't trust anyone. Be your own person. It's us versus them. ...

Adopting the prison culture around you might seem like a simple matter of survival, but it comes at a steep price. You have the best chance of turning your life around when you are in trusting relationships with other people who share your goals. But instead of building up positive relationships, prison culture leaves you isolated and breaks down true community—the very community you're going to need if

you want to change direction.

For many years, I have talked with men and women behind bars about prison culture. During these conversations, we also discuss the alternative values that build up communities where real transformation happens. In Galatians 5, a chapter of the New Testament, you find a list of the values that should define daily interactions in this new kind of community: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Unfortunately, for many people, those values don't sound like something to aspire to; they sound too weak, impractical, and naïve for life behind bars, or even back on the streets.

So what's a person to do? If you want to change, and if you need community to do it, how can you go against the grain of prison culture to build relationships based on integrity and mutual encouragement?

Here are some tips to get you started, based on what I have seen work in prisons around the country:

Take the lead. If you want to change the culture of your prison, you can't just gripe about what's wrong and hope it will change. You'll be waiting a long time. Instead, seek out the other people around you who aren't just playing the game, but whose lives demonstrate their readiness to live differently. Band together and commit to help one another through positive, intentional relationships.

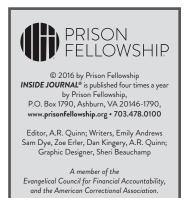
Recognize that you need a positive mentor. When Billy Kidd, the man whose story is on the cover, was 17, he wound up on a cell block with men who became his "mentors in crime." Perhaps you have

had a similar experience with someone who coached you in a criminal lifestyle. If you want to lead a transformed life, you need to find the opposite—a positive mentor who has walked a ways down the road you want to follow. That may be a volunteer who comes to your facility, or it may be a fellow prisoner who has consistently proven their commitment to life-change over time. Once you find a positive mentor, ask them to help guide you through the decisions you face and the goals you need to set.

Ask for feedback. We all have blind spots—difficult truths about ourselves that we cannot see, but which are obvious to people who know us well. The people closest to us rarely tell us about our blind spots, because doing so would cause conflict and might jeopardize the relationship.

That's why you need to seek out honest feedback. Ask your mentor or a trusted friend to reveal to you what your blind spots might be. It might not be the easiest conversation you'll ever have, but if you are serious about leading a changed life and building positive community, the information you get will be priceless.

Sam Dye is the senior vice president of field operations at Prison Fellowship.



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## INSIDE JOURNAL®

YOUR SOURCE OF INSPIRATION AND INFORMATION

VOLUME 25, NO. 4

**FALL 2016** 

# Mental Makeover p.2 At First Sight p.3 2017 CA LIMINARY LIMINARY LIMINARY Calendar p.4

### FROM DRUG DEALER TO HERO

by Taylor Harris

iane Reyes
doesn't want
anyone to get
the wrong idea
about why she
started selling drugs at 19. She
doesn't blame the neighborhood on the southeast side
of Houston, Texas, where she
grew up, and only speaks well
of her parents.

"My parents have been married 47 years this year," says Diane. "I never really had to do any of that [selling drugs]. I just wished to do it. I wanted to do it. It just gave me a thrill."

After making \$150 from her first sale, Diane progressed to buying expensive purses and shoes and, eventually, her own townhome. Along the way, she also dropped out of community college and lied to her parents, claiming a \$12-perhour job supported her new lifestyle.

"Money is the root of all evil—definitely," Diane says.

Looking back, Diane sees God's grace everywhere in her 1997 arrest—from the bailiff



With the money she made selling drugs, Diane Reyes could buy almost anything she wanted—except peace of mind.

who allowed her to keep her sneakers and make a phone call to the length of her prison stay. But at age 26, minutes after receiving a sentence of 22 years for five kilos of cocaine, she could only think: "I'm gonna turn 30 here."

#### In Too Deep

In reality, Diane served less than three years in the Dr.
Lane Murray Unit of Gatesville, Texas. She returned home and earned an honest paycheck for a few years before she lost her job, and the promise of quick money became too hard to resist. This time, the stakes were much higher.

"It was no longer one pound, two pounds, an ounce. Now it was 100 pounds, 200 pounds, a key of cocaine, another key of cocaine, four keys of cocaine ... Oh, I was making real money," Diane remembers.

In a time when the thirtysomething could buy anything she wanted, including a house on five acres, Diane says she felt the world was closing in on her. She filled her new house with security cameras and stashed money in the oven. She lost friends to drug violence and once had a gun pulled on her.

"Lord, I need some rest," she remembers praying one day.

On New Year's Eve 2006, Diane's world collapsed. After being rear-ended, she fled the scene of the accident. When police found her three hours later in her home, they also found \$283,000 in the oven. She would go on to serve almost eight years in prison for money laundering—but not before finding the rest she'd been seeking.

#### Healing Through Sisterhood

One night in her cell at Carole Young Medical Facility, Diane lay in bed listening to the only radio station that would come in clearly—a Christian one. The program mentioned a woman who had written in from prison, and it was then that Diane began crying, fell on her knees in the dark, and repented.

A month later, Diane joined about 30 women in the Sisterhood of Ruth, a new Prison Fellowship program designed to help long-term prisoners re-enter society.

Continued on page 2

### PRISON JOURNALISM ENGAGES MINDS

by Will Mari

or almost as long as there have been modern prisons in America, there have been

prison newspapers.

Since the 1800s, they have provided day-to-day news to men and women behind bars and a safe space to address issues important to their daily lives. They have also educated their editors and reporters and allowed them to exercise their talents. Most importantly, they have provided a sense of community and purpose to those who've written for, edited, and read them.

"Ultimately we're trying to train people to deal with freedom ... newspapers are a great training ground for that," said James McGrath Morris, the author of "Jailhouse Journalism," a history of American prison newspapers. Reporting, editing,

taking photos, and designing pages provides a creative outlet for the incarcerated. These skills serve as continuing education, and "the more educated people are the

less likely [they are to get involved in crime]" once out, Morris said.

Prison newspapers have been published in a variety of forms, from simple news-

letters to officially sanctioned broadsheets printed on newsprint.

#### Transformation on Paper

"Prison newspapers per-



Prison journalism has a rich history in the United States, stretching back more than 100 years. While journalism is changing on both sides of the razor wire, prison reporters, editors, photographers, and designers still produce top-notch work and keep their readers informed.

formed exactly the same functions as they did on the outside," said Morris. While imperfect, the reformminded wardens of the late 19th and early 20th centuries believed that journalism could be transformational. Wardens also relied on prison papers to get information about life in their own prisons. Their writers and editors took pride in their work, and their ranks included editors and reporters who had worked in newsrooms outside of prisons.

But even as the incarcerated population grew dramatically in the late 20th century, prison papers failed to keep pace. They reached a kind of plateau in the 1970s and 1980s, when they faced declining budgets and neglect.

"I went from a current events book to writing a book of history," said Morris, who witnessed the closure of prison newspapers during

Continued on page 2

## A MENTAL MAKEOVER

Dear Reader,

By now you may have noticed that Inside Journal has a new look. Starting in summer 2016, we have a fresh design intended to make this paper more attractive and easier to read. We hope you like it!

It's not just newspapers that need to get refreshed from time to time. Whether it's a new haircut, a new exercise routine, or something more drastic, a little change can do just about anybody good.

Some of the most important changes happen where they can't be seen—in your mind. If you want your life to look different, you have to act differently. And if you want to act differently, first you have to think differently. But how?

In his letter to the Christians who lived in Rome, a place where a lot of people were chasing power and wealth, Paul wrote, "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect" (Romans 12:2, NLT).

There are two steps here.
The first one is to stop paying attention to negative voices that reinforce old ways of thinking—no matter how loud they are. Don't let yourself



get squeezed into the same mold as everybody else.

The second is to open up your mind. Look at life from new angles. Turn off the T.V. and open a good book. Take every opportunity to further your education. Invest in your mind—one of your greatest resources—and watch a new outlook change your life.

Doing time doesn't have to mean turning off your brain. Many people in the criminal justice system are finding ways to stay engaged mentally and make important contributions to their communities, whether those communities are in the free world or behind bars. We've told some of their stories in this edition. We hope you get inspired!

A.R. Quinn

A.R. Quir Editor

#### Subscription Info

At Inside Journal<sup>®</sup> (IJ), we receive many letters each week from prisoners asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers—however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is only available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

#### Prison Journalism Continued from page 1

his research.

By the 1990s, "most prison newspapers were gone" in the dozens of overlapping prison systems across the country, said Shon Hopwood, a teaching fellow at the Georgetown University Law Center's Appellate Litigation Program. (Another prisoner who applied his mind in prison, Hopwood served time in federal prison for his involvement in five bank robberies; but he studied on his own time, wrote legal briefs for fellow prisoners, and then later attended and graduated from the University of Washington School of Law.)

#### A Tradition of Excellence

Despite setbacks, the legacy of prison papers continues. Some of the better-known papers that survive into the present include the San Quentin News (published on and off since the 1920s), The Angolite (published in the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana) and The Prison Mirror. The latter is published at the Minnesota Stillwater Correctional Facility and was founded in 1887 by a former member of the James-Younger gang. The Angolite has earned praise for its features on the lives of those in prison and ways their lives can be improved. Not to be outdone, the staff of the San Quentin News has done a particularly good job working with the administration there, winning a James Madison Freedom of Information Award in 2014 for its reporting on prison life.

While paper as a delivery mechanism has faded, there's more news than ever that could be shared about and within prisons, even as access to information from the outside world has increased, said Morris. Prisoners and prison administrators could work together to form internal news sites that cover their prisons much as older prison papers used to, he said.

While journalistic work can be challenging in these spaces, prison reporters and editors have brought awareness to endemic issues like sexual violence. Sometimes simply bringing attention to issues faced within prisons is the first step to making them better for everyone.

As a tool for gaining vocational and life skills, prison journalism remains a "therapeutic training ground" for life. Eventually, most of the people in prison will leave and re-enter society. Telling stories about their lives while there is a good start.

"It is a particularly good craft no matter what you do," Morris said. "It's a healthy and a vitally important thing."

Will Mari is an assistant professor of communication at Northwest University in Kirkland, Washington.

#### **Hero** Continued from page 1

"It's positive intervention, it's life skills, it's all of that wrapped with Jesus," explains Diane, who says she threw herself full-force into the program.

The women lived together and attended church and class together for several hours each week. They completed Beth Moore Bible studies and a twelve-step recovery program that centered on Jesus as their higher power. They shared their stories and cried and prayed together.

"Nothing like it had ever

been done before," recalls Bill Loyd, a Prison Fellowship field director who started the Sisterhood. "The hope was that over two years, they'd change from the inside out."

Bill certainly saw that change in Diane. "Diane is one who just enveloped the Holy Spirit," he recalls.

#### Never Give Up

Now, three years after being released from prison, Diane returns voluntarily to mentor women in the Sisterhood. "I go back for me and for them and for God," she explains. "I go back because there's too much hurt." Often she tells the women not to

"It was no longer one pound, two pounds, an ounce. Now it was 100 pounds, 200 pounds, a key of cocaine, another key of cocaine, four keys of cocaine ... Oh, I was making real money."



In a community of women who wanted the same thing, Diane discovered new ways of thinking. Now she's out of prison, and she just got her degree—an important step toward a whole new future.

give up—on themselves or on Jesus. "You have to turn around and trust God," she tells them. "You don't have to clean up first."

And Diane hasn't given up on using her talent in sales for good. In May, she graduated from San Jacinto College with plans to start her own HVAC company one day. She

works as a dispatcher for a gas company now and jokes about making \$16 per hour and not driving a Mercedes. But on the days when she truly does feel tempted or challenged by her past, she still calls Bill.

"Talk to me," she tells him. "I need to be grounded."

The encouragement, it seems, goes both ways.

"I just really love her," says Bill. "She's just amazing. People like her that come from backgrounds where they should have been dead, all the way now to caring and giving back and working with other women after spending time in prison—they're my heroes."

## FREEDOM AT FIRST SIGHT

by E.G. Andrews

tay in college ... stay there until you are through," boxing icon

Muhammad Ali once said. "If they can make penicillin out of moldy bread, they can sure make something of you."

Ali never attended college, but he recognized the value of a good education. It's something that many-especially those with easy access to ittake for granted.

#### "Never Felt So Free"

Knowing the worth of a good education, Eric Anthamatten, a writer and university instructor, has done his part to make it accessible in unlikely places. He spent eight years teaching college-level philosophy courses behind bars. In an article for The Atlantic, he talks about a memorable student named Roy.

Roy, who had once worked as a truck driver in Texas, is now spending the rest of his days behind bars. But after going through one of Anthamatten's classes, the lifer noted, "I've never felt so free as when I'm in this class."

College courses didn't just give Roy something to do; they gave him the chance to expand his mind, even from a place as restricted as prison. He would read, write, and discuss topics that made him think differently, freely, and critically. Every day, his teacher was inviting him to see the world through new eyes.

Roy's experience is much like those of many other prisoners as a result of in-prison education. Behaviors improve. Leaders are born. A prison culture can begin to change. Even lifers like Roy can use their time in a meaningful way, using their capacity to learn, think, and imagine, all for the pure joy of it.

Christopher Shapard, a prisoner in New York, observed in an interview with The Post Star, "Education is absolutely necessary for someone to be able to go out there and realize how they're living their life is not the only way. It changes them."

Education changes things. It doesn't just make you feel better about yourself. It can sharpen your mind and increase your abilities. For those re-entering society, it can provide something new to share with the world beyond the gates. An education can be the first step to better jobs and other new opportunities.

#### Seeing with New Eyes

Because education often improves our lives, many people think education is the ultimate answer to our problems-like the secret ingredient to the happiest, fullest life. But while education can so long.

The Bible looks deeper not just at the way we store knowledge, but also at the way we really see ourselves, others, and the world around us. In the book of Matthew, Jesus talks about a new way of "seeing." It's a view, or a mindset, that we all can have. It's beyond what an earthly education can give us. Education can improve your life here and now, but renewing your mindset spiritually benefits you now and forever.

To explain this, Jesus talked about "the lamp of the body." Like a lamp, our mindset, or what He called our "eyes," is where light comes through the filter through which we see everything. If we have

bring good things, its benefits only go so far and only last for

#### TIME FOR A VISION CHECK

Even when prisons offer education, it's not always easy to access. Some programs involve a competitive application process. Sometimes no programs are offered at all.

But God's grace is a free gift, available to all who call on Him. Because Jesus died on the cross and rose again, He has paid the price for our sins. We can have forgiveness and a new life in Him. If you will let Him, He will renew your mind, heart, and soul. You can start with a prayer like this:

God, I have been seeing this world through my own eyes. But without You, it's like I'm blind. Please come into my life and help me to see You more clearly. Thank You that Your grace covers everything I've done.

Just like Paul, we are transformed when we let Jesus into our lives. His power and grace make us whole. That is a hope that changes things—both now and forever. If you'd like to find out more about a relationship with God through Jesus, Inside Journal wants to help. Write to "Vision Check," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. We'll help you get signed up for a free correspondence Bible study offered by one of our partner organizations.

good eyes, we see the world as it truly is. But a bad mindset distorts everything.

A man named Saul was living with a distorted view before he encountered Jesus. Saul was a leader, he was educated, and he had great power. The teachings of Jesus upset him so much that he made it his mission to harass and even kill people who claimed to follow Jesus. But as he was traveling one day, a great light appeared, and Jesus spoke from heaven: "Why do you persecute me?" That great light caused Saul to go blind.

But God was not yet finished with Saul, whose sight was restored. And for the first time, Saul, who changed his name to Paul, was seeing clearly—not just with

his eyes, but with the right mindset. The man who had been walking in darkness had been transformed by Jesus, the "light of the world" (John 8:12). He now saw Jesus for who He truly was, the one true God who came into the world to save us from our sin. This didn't just change his behavior; it changed the purpose and perspective of his life.

Paul became a missionary and wrote several books of the Bible. Since rulers of the day often were openly hostile to the spreading of Christianity, Paul did much of his writing from a prison cell. But even behind bars, he held onto hope. He had found it in the God who couldn't bear to let Paul stay blind.

And that hope set him free. ■

## **NEWS OF NOTE**

A good education can take you a long way.

A renewed mindset will take you even farther.

#### Dept. of Education Launches Pell Pilot

Of the 2.2 million Americans behind bars today, a majority do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent. The U.S. Department of Education's Second Chance Pell Program will test new models allowing some men and women to receive Pell grants for postsecondary education behind bars.

The Pell grants may be used to cover tuition, fees, books, and supplies, according to a press release from the U.S. Department of Education. Twelve thousand prisoners will be enrolled at over 100 correctional institutions in the U.S., with dozens of colleges and universities participating in the partnership.

In this program, prisoners are taught with the same curriculum as students in the free world. Attending classes behind bars gives them a head start as they earn college credits and start building a resume. It gives them hope for a better life post-release.

"Going to college gave me tools," says Jermaine, a participant through Goucher College in Baltimore. "It's taught me patience. It's taught me hard work. It taught me that more things are possible."

#### NM Prisoners Help **Needy Students**

In the spring of 2016, prisoners at the Southern New Mexico Correctional Facility decided to provide some classroom essentials for local schoolchildren.

"It was a team effort," says unit director Nina Salcido-Marquez, as reported by Las Cruces Sun-News. "They wanted to raise money for backpacks, to give to students in August. It's their way of giving back to the community."



By selling food and concessions within the prison, the men raised around \$200. Every cent would go toward the backpacks, as well as supplies to fill them. Pencils, notebooks, glue sticks, water bottles—each backpack was stocked and ready to be distributed at select schools. Prison employees even donated items to the cause.

By distribution day, social workers had identified students who qualified to receive a backpack, based on need. Principal Roberto Lozano of MacArthur Elementary

School says the backpacks helped start the school year on a high note. "They're excited, especially with backpacks that have some kind of design," he tells Las Cruces Sun-News. "And, obviously, they're very grateful."

#### **Summit Trains Prison Leaders**

Every year, the Willow Creek Association broadcasts its Global Leadership Summit to audiences across North America, encouraging and equipping participants to become better employers, instructors, and leaders.

Included with the hundreds of churches and organizations who hosted the 2016 simulcast were 43 prisons, where attendees received training to help them become more effective leaders in prison and, for those who are preparing to leave prison, productive members of their communities.

Thirty-six facilities participating in this year's Summit currently have Prison Fellowship programming. One

of those was the Muskegon Correctional Facility in Muskegon, Michigan.

Jason, a man who participated in the summit at Muskegon, summed up the benefits well, noting, "As an inmate, the Global Leadership Summit was a unique opportunity to be exposed to-and learn from-some of the smartest and most successful leaders in the world. One of the biggest challenges that an inmate faces is overcoming the feeling that your life is a failure, or, even worse, that it simply doesn't matter. It's the feeling that your life will forever be defined by the sum total of the mistakes you made that brought you to prison. It's the feeling that the worldand even God-must be done with you. Most of prison is designed to reinforce this feeling, but there are occasions when the truth of God's promise in each of our lives breaks through, and the GLS is one of those occasions." ■

**INSIDE JOURNAL** | Fall 2016

#### **2017 CALENDAR**



"Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." - Psalm 90:12 (NIV)

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31										

#### **HOLIDAYS**

January 1 – New Year's Day

January 16 – Martin Luther King Day

February 14 – Valentine's Day

February 20 - Presidents Day

April 16 – Easter

May 14 – Mother's Day

May 29 – Memorial Day

June 18 – Father's Day

July 4 – Independence Day

August – Don't forget to submit your Angel Tree prisoner participation form!

Anger Tree prisoner participation for

September 4 – Labor Day November 10 – Veterans Day

November 23 – Thanksgiving Day

December 25 – Christmas Day

#### MY IMPORTANT DATES

1	PRISON FELLOWSHIP
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INSIDE JOURNAL® is published
four times a year by Prison Fellowship,
P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790,
prisonfellowship.org • 703.478.0100

Editor, A.R. Quinn; Writers, E.G. Andrews, Taylor Harris, Will Mari, A.R. Quinn; Graphic Designer, Sheri Beauchamp

A member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, and the American Correctional Association.

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TU FUENTE DE INFORMACIÓN E INSPIRACIÓN

VOLUMEN 4, NO. 2

**OTOÑO 2016** 

#### **EN ESTA EDICIÓN:**

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- Contra la Corriente <sub>p.3</sub>
- Calendario 2017 <sub>p.4</sub>

## DE NARCOTRAFICANTE A HÉROE

#### Por Taylor Harris

iane Reyes no tiene intenciones de transmitir una idea equivocada de los motivos por los que empezó a vender drogas a los 19 años. No culpa

drogas a los 19 años. No culpa al vecindario, localizado al sudeste de Houston, Texas, donde creció, y sólo dice cosas buenas de sus padres.

"Este año mis padres cumplen 47 años de matrimonio," dice Diane. "Nunca tuve la necesidad de hacer nada de eso [vender drogas], simplemente quise hacerlo. Quería hacerlo. Me provocaba mucha emoción".

Después de hacer \$150 en su primera venta, Diane progresó hasta poder comprar zapatos y carteras costosas y, eventualmente, su propia casa. A lo largo del camino, también abandonó la escuela universitaria y mintió a sus padres, diciendo que su nuevo estilo de vida provenía de su trabajo de \$12 por hora.

"El dinero es la raíz de todos



Con el dinero que ganaba vendiendo drogas, Diane Reyes podría comprar todo lo que deseaba—sino paz.

los males ... definitivamente," dice Diane.

Al mirar atrás, Diane es capaz de ver la gracia de Dios en todos los acontecimientos que ocurrieron en su arresto de 1997: desde el alguacil que le permitió conservar sus tenis y hacer una llamada telefónica, hasta la duración de su estancia en prisión. Pero a la edad de 26 años, minutos después de recibir una sentencia de 22 años de cárcel por cinco kilos de cocaína, en lo único que podía pensar era, "Voy a cumplir los 30 aquí."

#### Hasta el Cuello

En realidad, Diane permaneció menos de tres años en la Unidad Dr. Lane Murray de Gatesville, Texas. Volvió a casa y obtuvo un salario honesto durante algunos años antes de perder su empleo; fue entonces cuando la promesa del dinero fácil se volvió demasiado fuerte como para resistirla. Esta vez, los riesgos eran mucho mayores.

"Ya no se trataba de una libra, dos libras, una onza. Ahora eran 100 libras, 200 libras, un kilo de cocaína, otro kilo de cocaína, cuatro kilos de cocaína ... estaba ganando mucho dinero," recuerda Diane.

En una época en que, con treinta y pocos años, podía comprar lo que quisiera, incluyendo una casa de cinco acres, Diane dice que sentía que el mundo se cerraba a su alrededor. Llenó su nueva casa de cámaras de seguridad y ocultó una provisión de dinero en el horno. Perdió amigos en conflictos por drogas y una vez le apuntaron con un arma.

"Dios mío, necesito un descanso," recuerda haber rezado una vez.

En la época de año nuevo de 2006, el mundo de Diane colapsó. Sufrió un choque en la parte trasera de su auto y escapó de la escena del accidente. Tres horas después, cuando la policía la encontró en su casa, también encontraron \$283,000 en el horno. Fue enviada a prisión durante casi ocho años por lavado de dinero, pero no antes de en-

Continúa en la pág. 2

## EL CÁNCER UNE A LAS MUJERES ENCARCELADAS

#### Por Zoe Erler

uando Lorie Longoria fue diagnosticada con cáncer de seno en fase 2 durante su estadía en el sistema penitenciario de Texas, su primer pensamiento fue "¿Sigo siendo castigada?" a lo cual le siguió un pensamiento todavía más doloroso: "No quiero morir en prisión."

Enfrentó una mastectomía doble, después la quimioterapia, posteriormente perdió todo su cabello y, por último, la cirugía reconstructiva.

"Durante mi lucha estuve muy sola," admite. "Lo pasé bastante mal cuando tuve que cortar mi cabello porque comenzó a caerse. Tenía tantas dudas que ni siquiera sabía si estaba haciendo las preguntas correctas."

A pesar de haberse sentido

totalmente sola durante esta dura experiencia, Longoria, quien estaba encarcelada en el Carole Young Medical Facility, en realidad estaba rodeada por otras mujeres que también estaban lidiando con diagnósticos difíciles, incluyendo el cáncer. Un día, experimentó una epifanía.

¿Por qué no comenzar un grupo de apoyo para que otras no tengan que atravesar este camino solas? Se preguntó.

Se acercó a Bill Loyd, director de campo de la prisión del Sudeste de Texas, para saber si él podría ayudarla a iniciar ese grupo. No mucho tiempo después, el Departamento de Justicia Criminal de Texas otorgó el permiso.

#### Juntas en Tiempos Difíciles

El 16 de enero de 2015, las Sisters of Love, Life, and Strength (SOLLS, Hermanas de Amor, Vida y Fortaleza)



Nadie quiere enfrentar cáncer, pero para unas mujeres en Texas, una experiencia inesperada se convirtió en algo hermoso.

tuvieron su primera reunión.

En un lugar como la prisión, donde la supervivencia, privacidad, y fuerza externa son altamente valoradas, este grupo está sentando un precedente: Que hacerlo sola no es mejor que hacerlo juntas. Y que la vulnerabilidad y comunidad puede transformar el tiempo en prisión, no sólo en una época más tolerable, sino también en algo hermoso.

Motivada por Loyd a liderar el equipo, la antigua banquera y sobreviviente de cáncer de seno, Nadine Eidman, nunca soño con visitar una prisión, mucho menos ser voluntaria en una; pero cuando Loyd le preguntó si estaría dispuesta a ayudar, su propia experiencia con la enfermedad la empujó a decir "Sí."

"Escuchar la palabra 'cáncer' es muy difícil. Yo tuve el beneficio de contar con mi familia, con personas que me acompañaban a escuchar lo que decían los doctores. Estas mujeres no tienen a nadie. Son sólo ellas, los doctores, y la enfermedad. Es un reto mucho mayor."

Mujeres de todas las edades y

Continúa en la pág. 2

#### TU PROPIO Y MEJOR DEFENSOR

#### Por Dan Kingery

Cuando ya estás en el sistema puede parecer desalentador. Tienes muy pocas opciones, poco estímulo, y un montón de personas diciéndote qué hacer. Es tentadora la idea de simplemente apagar tu cerebro y nomás hacer la sentencia.

Sin embargo, cada uno de nosotros es creado con habilidades únicas. Es poco saludable y contra nuestro destino adormecernos y dejar que pase el tiempo. Podría parecer lo más sencillo a corto plazo, pero forzarte a ti mismo a "hacer tiempo" desperdicia el regalo de cada día, fomenta la desesperanza, y te predispone al fracaso al salir de la cárcel.

La verdad es que, incluso estando tras las rejas, aún tienes un poco de control. Tu actitud es el único factor decisivo en cuanto a si haces tiempo o te esfuerzas por encontrar la manera de usar tu tiempo.

El primer paso para usar tu tiempo efectivamente es negarte a pensar en ti mismo como una víctima de la situación que alguien más te impuso. Tú tienes la opción de ser la mejor persona que puedas ser el día de hoy y de trabajar por la persona que quieres ser mañana. Decide cuáles son las acciones—tanto psicológicas como físicas—que llevarás a cabo para hacer más

que simplemente pasar el día. Piensa en las cosas buenas que puedes hacer por ti mismo y por los demás usando el talento y las oportunidades que tienes.

El segundo paso es comprender que todos vivimos en una comunidad. A veces hablamos como si "la comunidad" sólo existiera fuera de la prisión. El hecho es que, ahora mismo, vives en una comunidad y puedes ser una voz poderosa que impulse el bienestar, la seguridad, y el crecimiento dentro de la misma. Desde Angola hasta Zephyrhills, cada uno de los residentes de cada prisión tiene la oportunidad de ser un buen ciudadano hoy.

Tus acciones y actitudes moldean tu comunidad en la prisión. Cuando decides establecer relaciones fuertes y en favor de la sociedad, esto te beneficia a ti y a tus vecinos. Cuando ayudas a resolver problemas, respetas a otros, y fomentas una vida saludable, eres parte de la solución. Ya sea

que fuera ese tu objetivo o no, eres un modelo a seguir para las personas que te rodean.

El 95 por ciento de los prisioneros serán liberados, y muchos de ellos tienen una gran visión acerca de lo que harán cuando sean libres; pero practicar una buena ciudadanía en la comunidad de la prisión aumenta ampliamente tus oportunidades de ser un buen ciudadano afuera. No te engañes a ti mismo: No hay nada mágico en el hecho de atravesar la puerta. La persona que eres en prisión es la misma que serás en las calles.

Así que empieza ahora mismo. Es posible que no tengas muchas libertades ahora, pero aún tienes lo que es más importante: control sobre tu actitud y aspiraciones, influencia, y la posibilidad de elegir cómo usarás tu tiempo hoy. Usa lo que tengas para hacer el bien. Dan Kingery es el vicepresidente de los programas de campo de Prison Fellowship.

#### Información Sobre Suscripciones

Recibimos muchas cartas de hombres y mujeres en prisión que quieren recibir Inside Journal en Español. Damos gracias a Dios por su interés, pero nuestro periódico solo está disponible por medio de capellanes o voluntarios que visitan su prisión. Capellanes y voluntarios pueden contactarnos por escribir a insidejournal@pfm.org o Inside Journal, PO Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146 para recibir Inside Journal (en inglés, español, o ambos) gratis.

#### Cáncer Une a Mujeres Viene de la pág. 1

etapas de cáncer comenzaron a aparecer los viernes para recibir ánimo durante su lucha y para alentar a las demás.

En todas las reuniones del grupo hay entre ocho y 25 asistentes. Cerca del 50 por ciento tienen cáncer y el resto tienen otros diagnósticos. Hacen preguntas y comparten respuestas.

"Algunas de ellas en realidad no comprenden el diagnóstico; en ocasiones no saben lo que es un nódulo linfático", explica Eidman. "No saben qué preguntar y no comprenden lo que les dijeron. Es sorprendente".

Juntas se ayudan una a la otra a comprender lo que está ocurriendo en sus cuerpos durante el tratamiento y discuten formas de vida más saludables, incluso mientras batallan con la enfermedad. Rezan por las demás, leen las Sagradas Escrituras y otros materiales inspiradores y, a veces, incluso bromean. Se ayudan mutuamente a confiar en Dios durante los altibajos que experimentan.

"Celebramos cuando a una de nosotras le está yendo bien y, cuando ocurre lo contrario, nos unimos aún más; reconocemos que todos nuestros días están contados. Es una oportunidad de reenfocarnos", dice Eidman.

Uno de los momentos más difíciles del año pasado, fue cuando un miembro clave del grupo falleció.

"Ella era una fuente de felicidad y valentía, y un ejemplo a seguir para las otras muieres". dice Eidman.

mujeres", dice Eidman. "Y sí es difícil. Es muy difícil," agrega.

#### Algo Hermoso

Pero quizás, más allá de todo, el grupo se ha convertido en una familia.

Marcela Roman dice que no tenía intenciones de asistir cuando fue invitada por una amiga. "No quería llorar," explica.

A pesar de su diagnóstico de cáncer en la tiroides, su familia no respondió a sus cartas, y esto la hizo sentir aislada y sola.

Su amiga le dijo que no era necesario que dijera nada, sólo debía asistir y escuchar.

"Así que fuimos y presté atención. Estaba escuchando a cada una de esas personas compartir el dolor por el que estaban atravesando y que yo también sentía; pero son también personas fuertes que se motivan entre sí."

Fue así como continuó asistiendo y ahora no falta ningún viernes.

"Ellas te apoyan como una verdadera familia," dice Roman.

De acuerdo con Longoria, ésa siempre ha sido la meta: "Quiero que la gente sepa que, aunque estemos lejos de nuestras familias durante esta época tan difícil, Dios les ha otorgado una hermosa familia a todas las mujeres encarceladas en la comunidad de SOLLS".

#### Héroe

Viene de la pág. 1

contrar el descanso que había estado buscando.

#### Sanando a través de la Hermandad

Una noche estando en su celda en el Carole Young Medical Facility, Diane se recostó en la cama mientras escuchaba la única emisora de radio que se oía claramente (una emisora cristiana). En el programa se mencionó a una mujer que había escrito desde la prisión, y fue en ese momento en que Diane comenzó a llorar, se arrodilló en la oscuridad, y se arrepintió.

Un mes después, Diane se reunió con cerca de 30 mujeres en la Hermandad de Ruth, un nuevo programa grupal diseñado para ayudar a los prisioneros de largo plazo a

2

reintegrarse a la sociedad.

"La intervención positiva, las habilidades de vida, todo eso está relacionado con Jesucristo," explica Diane, quien dice que se avocó profundamente al programa.

Las mujeres vivían y atendían juntas la iglesia, además de asistir a clases durante varias horas cada semana. Completaron los estudios bíblicos de Beth Moore y un programa de recuperación de doce pasos enfocado en Jesucristo come su "Poder Superior." Compartieron sus historias, lloraron, y oraron juntas.

"Nunca antes se había hecho algo como eso," recuerda Bill Lloyd, el director de campo de la prisión que inició el programa de Hermandad. "La esperanza era que, en un periodo de dos años, ellas cambiarían desde el interior."

Bill ciertamente logró ver

Fto por Chad Prince

Entre rejas Diane descrubrió una comunidad de mujeres que la ayudaron a cambiar su vida.

ese cambio en Diane. "Diane es una de las que está inmersa en el Espíritu Santo," dice.

#### Nunca te rindas

Ahora, tres años después de haber sido liberada de prisión, Diane vuelve voluntariamente como mentora para ayudar a otras mujeres en la Hermandad. "Regreso por mí, por ellas y por Dios," explica. "Regreso porque hay mucho dolor." Generalmente, les dice a las mujeres que no se rindan, ya sea que lo hagan por sí mismas o por Jesucristo. "Debes

darte la vuelta y confiar en Dios," les dice. "No es necesario que limpies primero."

Y Diane no ha renunciado a usar su talento de vendedora para bien. En mayo del 2016, se graduó de la universidad de San Jacinto con planes de comenzar su propia empresa HVAC algún día. Actualmente, trabaja como despachadora de una empresa de gas y bromea acerca de ganar \$16 por hora y no poder conducir un Mercedes. Pero los días en que realmente se siente tentada o retada por su

pasado, aún llama a Bill.

"Háblame," le dice.
"Necesito enfocarme."

Al parecer, la motivación proviene de ambas partes.
"Poalmonto la adoro" die

"Realmente la adoro," dice Bill, "Es maravillosa. Las personas como ella, que provienen de ambientes de donde ya pudieron estar muertas y desde todo ese recorrido hasta ahora ser una persona compasiva, colaborando y trabajando con otras mujeres después de haber pasado épocas en prisión ... ese tipo de persona es mi héroe."

"Ya no se trataba de una libra, dos libras, una onza. Ahora eran 100 libras, 200 libras, un kilo de cocaína, otro kilo de cocaína, cuatro kilos de cocaína ... estaba ganando mucho dinero."

## EL COMPAÑERO DE CELDA INESPERADO

Por E.G. Andrews

n abril del año
2016, el Sargento
Joseph Serna pasó
una noche tras las
rejas; sin embargo,
el Boina Verde
retirado de las Fuerzas Especiales estaba acostumbrado a
los lugares oscuros.

En el curso de tres viajes a Afganistán, Serna sobrevivió a varias experiencias traumáticas que fácilmente, podrían haber acabado con su vida. Soportó los peligros de una bomba en la carretera y un atentado suicida, y volvió a estar cerca de la muerte al sufrir el volcamiento de un camión que cayó de cabeza en un canal.

Sólo el Sargento Serna podría haber sobrevivido.

A pesar de que estos incidentes le merecieron a Serna varias condecoraciones, también obtuvo su respectiva porción de carga emocional. Al igual que muchos de sus compañeros soldados, sufre de trastorno de estrés postraumático (TEPT), y de una sensación constante de aislamiento y soledad. Para poder lidiar con el dolor, cayó en el alcoholismo. Su situación alcanzó el punto crítico en Fayetteville, Carolina del Norte, cuando fue arrestado y enfrentó cargos por conducir bajo la influencia del alcohol.

Parte de la sentencia de Serna incluía que se presentará ante el Juez Lou Olivera y el Tribunal de Tratamiento de Veteranos cada dos semanas. Una vez, Serna mintió cerca de un examen reciente de orina. Posteriormente, admitió haber mentido y el juez lo sentenció a una noche tras las rejas. Noche Oscura

Después de estas experiencias de guerra, Serna comenzó a temer a los lugares encerrados. Una noche solo en la prisión parecía más de lo que este veterano podía soportar. Olivera podía notar que Serna estaba ansioso. Posteriormente recordó "Cuando Joe vino a entregarse estaba temblando."

Joe Serna sabía que sería una larga noche.

Muchos de nosotros hemos experimentado una "noche oscura del alma." Es ése el tipo de noche que enfrentó Serna en aquella celda de Carolina del Norte. No había forma de que pudiera salir de la celda. Estaba harto de lidiar con el TEPT. Esto era una pesadilla más de la que desearía poder despertar. La peor parte es que tenía que enfrentar todo aquello solo.

La Biblia habla de las experiencias de Jesús con la soledad. Jesús, que vivía una vida impecable, entró a nuestra oscuridad para poder darnos Su luz. Él nos mostró el amor de Dios, sanó a los enfermos y enseñó a aquéllos que estuvieron dispuestos a escuchar. Eventualmente, Jesús sería acusado por personas que se rehusaban a creer en Su mensaje. Fue entonces cuando tuvo que enfrentar la época



más oscura de Su vida: el abandono, el aislamiento, la tortura, y, finalmente, la muerte en una cruz. Sabiendo lo que estaba por venir, Jesús pasó tiempo solo en un jardín y rezó. Fue honesto en cuanto al dolor y la ansiedad, pero incluso en una noche tan oscura como ésta, le pidió a Dios que se cumpliera Su voluntad.

#### Nunca solo

Mientras Serna estaba sentado solo en su celda, el silencio fue interrumpido momentos después por un visitante inesperado: el juez Lou Olivera. Para sorpresa de Serna, el juez entró en la celda. La puerta se cerró detrás de él. "Sentí escalofríos cuando entró," le dijo el sargento retirado a The Fayetteville Observer.

Serna no se movió. Olivera se sentó a su lado. Era el único catre en la celda, y, naturalmente, Serna estaba confundido. Recordaba lo que Olivera había dicho horas antes, mientras conducían juntos a la prisión: "Ambos vamos a entregarnos."

El juez no podía estar hablando en serio. "¿Te quedarás conmigo durante la noche?" Preguntó Serna, incrédulo.

El juez replicó, "Sí, eso es lo que estoy haciendo."

A partir de entonces, Serna no fue el único hombre en la celda. Tampoco era el único veterano. Olivera había servido en la Guerra del Golfo y soportado una buena cantidad de horrores de guerra. Temía que una noche solo desencadenara el TEPT de Serna. Para cualquier soldado es difícil dejar atrás el campo de batalla.

Mientras comían un pastel de carne, él y Serna compartieron sus historias. Encontraron varias similitudes en sus

#### ¿TE SIENTES SOLO?

No importa si has estado en confinamiento solitario durante meses o si estás atrapado como una sardina en un dormitorio ruidoso con literas; la prisión puede ser un lugar de extrema soledad.

La Biblia deja muy en claro que no fuimos creados para estar solos. Desde el principio, fuimos creados para tener relaciones pacíficas y amorosas con Dios y con los demás. Hemos arruinado todo eso. Incluso en ese momento, Dios no pudo soportar el dejarnos permanecer separados de Él, así que envió a Jesús—también llamado Emmanuel, o "Dios con nosotros"—para que muriera en una cruz y pagara el precio por nuestros pecados. Gracias a esto, ahora podemos comenzar una relación con Dios y encontrar una nueva vida en Él. Si quieres hacer esto hoy, puedes comenzar con esta simple oración:

Dios, he permanecido separado de Ti, pero ya no quiero estar solo. Gracias por demostrarme que quieres tener una relación conmigo. Por favor, ayúdame a dejar atrás mi pasado y entregarte mis quebrantos y vergüenzas. Deseo empezar de nuevo y caminar en Tu luz.

Dios ha recorrido largos trayectos para restaurar tu relación con Él. Ya no tienes que estar solo. Si quieres aprender más sobre lo que significa tener una relación con Dios a través de Jesús, Inside Journal puede ayudarte. Sólo escríbenos a "¿Te sientes solo?", P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. Podemos ayudarte a registrarte en una correspondencia gratuita de estudios bíblicos.

experiencias como soldados de los EE.UU. Olivera incluso le cedió a Serna el único catre de la celda, y durmió en un colchón sobre el piso. Literalmente de la noche a la mañana, su relación con el juez se transformó en algo que Serna nunca habría imaginado. Todo lo que hacía falta era contar con alguien; alguien que lo viera, no como lo que había hecho, sino como quien era en realidad.

"Era más como una conversación entre padre e hijo... fue muy personal", le dijo Serna a The Washington Times. Con un solo acto de humildad y compasión, una oscura y soli-

taria celda se transformó en algo mucho más luminoso.

Jesucristo demostró mucha más humildad y compasión cuando dio Su vida por nosotros. Ese sacrificio ha pagado la deuda que debemos por nuestros errores: una deuda que nunca habríamos podido saldar. Ahora, aquéllos que aceptan el don de la gracia de Cristo pueden unirse a una nueva comunidad: La hermandad con Dios. Todos están invitados a tener una relación con Dios, a ser llamados Sus hijos e hijas, y a experimentar una nueva vida teniéndolo a Él siempre a nuestro lado. Nadie tiene que pasar tiempo a solas.

## YENDO CONTRA LA CORRIENTE

#### Por Sam Dye

En los Estados Unidos hay cerca de 1,800 correccionales federales y estatales, además de 3,200 cárceles locales y del condado. Si te diriges a cualquiera de ellas, el código implícito que rige la vida tras las rejas es más o menos el mismo: No seas soplón. Ocúpate de tus propios asuntos. No confíes en nadie. Cuida de ti mismo. Somos nosotros contra ellos ...

Adoptar la cultura penitenciaria podría parecer un simple caso de supervivencia, pero viene con un precio muy alto. Tienes las mejores oportunidades de darle la vuelta a tu vida cuando cuentas con relaciones de confianza con otras personas que comparten tus metas. Pero, en vez de construir relaciones positivas, la cultura penitenciaria te aísla, a la vez que descompone la idea

de una verdadera comunidad—la misma comunidad que necesitarás si lo que deseas es cambiar de dirección.

Durante muchos años, he hablado acerca de la cultura penitenciaria con hombres y mujeres que se encuentran tras las rejas. Durante estas conversaciones, también discutimos los valores alternativos que constituyen las comunidades en que ocurren las verdaderas transformaciones. En Gálatas 5, un capítulo del Nuevo Testamento, se encuentra una lista de los valores que deberían definir las interacciones diarias en esta nueva clase de comunidad: Amor, alegría, paz, paciencia, amabilidad, bondad, lealtad, cortesía, y autocontrol. Desafortunadamente, para muchas personas esos valores no parecen algo a lo cual deberían aspirarse; suenan demasiado débiles, imprácticos,

e ingenuos para la vida tras las rejas o incluso en las calles.

Entonces, ¿qué debería hacerse? Si deseas cambiar y si necesitas que tu comunidad cambie, ¿cómo puedes ir contra la corriente de la cultura penitenciaria y construir relaciones basadas en la integridad y el aliento mutuo? Aquí hay algunos consejos para que puedas comenzar, basados en lo que yo mismo he visto en las prisiones alrededor del país:

las prisiones alrededor del país:

Toma la delantera. Si
quieres cambiar la cultura de
tu prisión, no basta sólo con
quejarte de lo que está mal y
esperar que cambie. Tendrías
que esperar por muchísimo
tiempo. En vez de eso, acude
a las otras personas alrededor
de ti quienes no solo están
siguiendo el juego, pero que
sus vidas demuestran la disposición a vivir de una manera
diferente. Únanse y comprométanse a ayudarse mutua-

mente mediante la construcción de relaciones positivas.

Reconoce que necesitas un mentor positivo. Prison Fellowship conoce a un hombre que tenía 17 años cuando se encontró encarcelado, y terminó en un conjunto de celdas con los hombres que se convirtieron en sus "mentores en el crimen."Es posible que hayas tenido una experiencia similar con alguien que te entrenó para una vida delictiva. Si quieres lograr una vida transformada, debes enfocarte en lo contrario: Un mentor positivo que ya conozca los caminos que tú aspiras a seguir. Esta persona podría ser un voluntario que asista a tu correccional o un compañero de celda que haya probado consistentemente su compromiso con un cambio de vida a lo largo del tiempo. Una vez que consigas un mentor positivo, pídele que te ayude a guiarte a través

de las decisiones que debes enfrentar y las metas que necesitas establecer.

Pídele que comente lo que ve. Todos tenemos puntos ciegos: verdades difíciles sobre nosotros mismos que no somos capaces de ver, pero que resultan obvias para las personas que nos conocen bien. Las personas más cercanas a nosotros, rara vez nos señalan nuestros puntos ciegos porque hacerlo causaría conflictos y pondría en peligro la relación. Es por eso que debes buscar comentarios honestos. Pídele a tu mentor o a un amigo de confianza que te diga cuáles podrían ser tus puntos débiles. Es posible que no sea una conversación muy cómoda, pero si estás decidido a experimentar un cambio en tu vida y construir una comunidad positiva, la información que obtengas será invaluable.

Sam Dye es es el vicepresidente superior de operaciones de campo en el Prison Fellowship.

#### **CALENDARIO 2017**



"Enséñanos a contar bien nuestros días, para que nuestra mente alcance sabiduría." – Salmos 90:12 (DHH)

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#### DÍAS FERIADOS/IMPORTANTES

1 de enero – Día del Año Nuevo

6 de enero – Día de los Reyes

16 de enero – Día de Martin Luther King (EEUU)

14 de febrero – Día de San Valentín

20 de febrero – Día de los Presidentes (EEUU)

16 de abril – Pascua

14 de mayo – Día de las Madres (EEUU)

29 de mayo – Día de los Caídos (EEUU)

18 de junio – Día de los Padres (EEUU)

4 de julio – Día de Independencia (EEUU) Agosto – No te olvides de entregar tu

formulario para Angel Tree.

4 de septiembre – Día del Trabajo (EEUU)

10 de noviembre – Día de los Veteranos (EEUU)

23 de noviembre – Día de la Acción de Gracias (EEUU)

25 de diciembre – Día de la Navidad

#### MIS FECHAS IMPORTANTES

	PRISON FELLOWSHIP
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Director Editorial, A.R. Quinn; Escritores, E.G. Andrews, Sam Dye, Zoe Erler, Taylor Harris, Dan Kingery; Diseñador Gráfico, Sheri Beauchamp

Un miembro del Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability y el American Correctional Association.

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